

WISCONSIN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN

**Title IV-B, CAPTA, Adoption, Chafee Foster Care
Independence, and Tribal Child Welfare State Plan for Federal
Fiscal Year 2007**

Annual Progress and Services Report for FFY 2006

**Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services
Division of Children and Family Services**

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Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Table of Contents

I.	Glossary of Terms for CFSP	3
II.	General Provisions for Title IV-B, CAPTA and Chafee	
	Administering Agency	5
	Organizational Structure	5
	Programs Included in Plan	6
	Relationship to CFSR	7
	Contact Person	7
III.	Description of Wisconsin Child Welfare Service System	8
IV.	State Child Welfare Objectives for 2005 -2009	10
V.	Annual Services and Progress Report (APSR)	
	Progress on 2005-2009 Plan Objectives	16
	IV-B Subpart 1, Child Welfare Services	23
	IV-B Subpart II, Promoting Safe and Stable Families	27
	Use of IV-B Funds for Current Federal Initiatives	33
	CAPTA (<i>Including Citizen Review Panels</i>)	37
	Adoption (<i>Including Adoption Incentives, MEPA, International Adoptions</i>)	45
	Chafee CFCIP and ETV	52
	Tribal Child Welfare (<i>Including Indian Child Welfare Act</i>)	71
	Kinship Care Program	75
	Title IV-E Foster Care Program (<i>Including Permanency Planning</i>)	77
	Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare	83
VI.	Additional Required Information for APSR	
	Transfers to Juvenile Justice	90
	Diligent Recruitment	91
I.	Child Welfare Demonstration Projects	
	Subsidized Guardianship Demonstration	94
VII.	Child Welfare Program Enhancement Plan	96
	Status of PEP Implementation	97
	National Performance Standards	98
II.	Child Welfare Systemic Factors	
	Information System Capacity (<i>Including CAPTA data reporting</i>)	100
	Research and Evaluation	102
	Case Review System	103
	Quality Assurance	105
	Training and Technical Assistance	108

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Service Array	111
Agency Responsiveness to Community	113
Licensing, Recruitment and Retention Efforts (Including Diligent Recruitment)	114
III. Child and Family Service Plan for FFY 2007	
IV-B Subpart I, Child Welfare Services	117
IV-B Subpart II, Promoting Safe and Stable Families	119
Adoption	122
CAPTA	127
Chafee CFCIP and ETV	139
Tribal Child Welfare	156
Title IV-E Foster Care Program	158
Kinship Care Program	160
Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare	161
IV. Fiscal Information	
Maintenance of Effort	163
CFS-101 Part 1	167
CFS 101 Part 2	168
IV-B Subpart 1 Budget for FFY 2007	169
IV-B Subpart II Budget for FFY 2007	170
IV-B Subpart II Match	171
CAPTA Budget for FFY 2007	172
Chafee ETV Budget for FFY 2007	173
Chafee CFCIP Budget for FFY 2007	174
V. Assurances	
IV-B	176
CAPTA	178
Chafee	182
ETV	184

Plan Attachments:

DHFS Organizational Chart
 DCFS Organizational Chart
 Adoption Program Report for 2005
 BMCW Corrective Action Plan Revised August 31, 2005
 Citizen Review Panel Annual Reports
 Tribal Child Welfare Priorities
 DHFS Tribal Consultation Policy

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

I. Glossary of Acronyms for the Wisconsin CFSP

Act 109 = 2001 Wisconsin Act 109 enacted in July 2002 that provided additional state statutory direction for implementation of AFSA and federal Title IV-E requirements

AFCARS = Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. Federal foster care data system to which states submit information. Source of permanency and placement data.

Area Administration = Department of Health and Family Services regional office staff in the Office of Strategic Finance that provide technical assistance to local child welfare agencies

ASFA = Adoption and Safe Families Act, particularly the ASFA requirement to pursue TPR after a child has been in OOH for 15 months

BMCW = Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare in DCFS, the state-operated child welfare agency for Milwaukee County

BPP = Bureau of Programs and Policies in DCFS, the state unit responsible for child welfare program policy and practice standards

BRL = Bureau of Regulation and Licensing in DCFS that licenses child placing agencies, child welfare facilities and child care facilities

CFSR = federal Child and Family Services Review

CFS 40 = DCFS form used to collect information on child abuse and neglect investigations previously used by Wisconsin to collect data for NCANDS purposes

Ch. HFS 44 = Proposed DCFS administrative rule on reasonable efforts and permanency planning

Ch. HFS 56 = DCFS administrative rule on foster home licensing

Chapter 48 = Wisconsin Children's Code

Chapter 138 = Wisconsin Juvenile Justice Code

Child Welfare Training Council = State body for coordinating child welfare training including DCFS, Counties, BMCW and the university-based Training Partnerships

Counties = County human or social service departments providing child welfare services

COKC = Court-ordered placements for which providers receive Kinship Care payments

CPS = Child protective services

CY = Calendar Year (January – December)

DCFS = Division of Children and Family Services, the state child welfare agency in Wisconsin

DHCF = Division of Health Care Financing, the state Medicaid agency in Wisconsin

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

FFY = Federal Fiscal Year (October – September)

GPR = General Purpose Revenues from state tax revenue.

HSRS = Human Services Reporting System. The Child Substitute Care module of HSRS was previously used by the state to collect data for AFCARS foster care purposes. The Adoption module of HSRS is still used to collect data for AFCARS adoption purposes.

ICWA = Indian Child Welfare Act

Kinship Care = Payment program to support children living with relatives

NCANDS = National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. Federal child abuse and neglect data system to which states submit information. Source of safety data.

OLC = Office of Legal Counsel in the Department of Health and Family Services

Ongoing Services Standards = The Ongoing Child Protective Services Standards and Practice Guidelines issued by DCFS that establish program standards for ongoing child welfare services

OOHC = Out-of-home care including children placed under court order in foster care, group homes, residential care centers and kinship care. Equivalent to the federal definition of foster care.

OPEP = Office of Program Evaluation and Planning in DCFS, the child welfare data office

PACE = A competency-based pre-service training curriculum for foster and adoptive parents

PEP = Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (equivalent to program improvement plan)

PEP Core Team = Statewide multidisciplinary group that developed the PEP

PEP Implementation Team = Statewide multidisciplinary group for implementation of the PEP

QA = Quality assurance program

PARC = Post-adoption resource center

Resource Center = New DCFS contractor for foster care and adoption resource center

SNAP = Special Needs Adoption Program operated by DCFS

Training Partnerships = University-based, regional child welfare training providers

TPR = Termination of parental rights

eWiSACWIS = Wisconsin Statewide Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS system)

eWiSACWIS Project Team = Staff supporting operation of eWiSACWIS system

II. GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR TITLE IV-B, CAPTA AND CHAFEE

Administering Agency for IV-B, CAPTA and Chafee

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services
Division of Children and Family Services
1 West Wilson Street, Room 550
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The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (Department) is an umbrella agency headed by a Cabinet-level Secretary. The Department has responsibility for the human service program areas of child and family services, mental health, developmental disabilities, substance abuse services, long-term support, aging services, medical assistance, and public health, among others. The Department organizational chart is attached to the plan.

The Department has delegated authority from the Governor's Office, as the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, to submit the Child and Family Services Plan and sign the required federal assurances.

Children and family services are located in the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). DCFS is the unit within the Department responsible for Title IV-B Subpart I (Child Welfare Services), IV-B Subpart II (Promoting Safe and Stable Families), Title IV-E (Foster Care and Adoption Assistance), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), and Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV). DCFS also manages the Title IV-E foster care program. The DCFS organizational chart is attached to the plan.

DCFS Organizational Structure

The Bureau of Programs and Policies (BPP) manages the Title IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee programs and is responsible for supervising Wisconsin's child welfare program, including prevention, child protection, foster care, adoption, and independent living services. Services are delivered primarily through county- and tribal-administered child welfare programs, except in Milwaukee County and for the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP), which are operated by DCFS. BPP operates the SNAP and other adoption services, including special needs adoptive placements, adoption assistance, paternal interest registry, and adoption search. Adoption services are provided using regional offices statewide and in Milwaukee through the Milwaukee adoption program. BPP also manages the Kinship Care program, Runaway Services and Homeless Youth programs, Domestic Violence programs, Community Service Block Grant, and other programs.

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) directly manages child welfare services in Milwaukee County, the state's largest county. The state-administered services

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

in Milwaukee County are delivered using DCFS staff for intake and initial assessment functions in partnership with contracted service providers for in-home safety services, ongoing case management, adoption, and foster home licensing. BMCW delivers child protection, foster care, adoption, kinship care and independent living services in accordance with state policies established by BPP.

The Office of Program Evaluation and Planning (OPEP) coordinates planning at the state level and is responsible for federal data reporting, program outcome monitoring, and state preparation for federal Children and Family Services Reviews and Title IV-E Reviews. OPEP includes the DCFS staff on the eWiSACWIS Project Team that manage the state child welfare data system.

Quality assurance activities are managed jointly by several units. BPP and BMCW have quality assurance staff that monitor program activity statewide and in Milwaukee County, respectively. Department Area Administrative staff in regional offices are also involved in child welfare program quality assurance on behalf of DCFS.

The Bureau of Regulation and Licensing (BRL) is responsible for licensing child placing agencies, group homes, shelter care facilities, and residential care centers for children and youth and provides technical assistance regarding licensing. BRL also licenses group childcare centers and family daycare homes.

The DCFS Bureaus and Offices coordinate all activities under the Title IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee programs. DCFS staff work together to develop, implement, and monitor federal and state child welfare policies and programs. Their shared knowledge of state, county, and tribal government agencies, private organizations, and local community resources supports comprehensive planning and programming across the full continuum of state and local child welfare services in Wisconsin.

Programs Included in the Child and Family Services Plan

This Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2007 Child and Family Services Plan includes Titles IV-B Subparts I and II, CAPTA, Chafee CFCIP and ETV, Adoption, and Tribal Child Welfare. The 2007 plan updates the 5-year child welfare program objectives established in the 2005 plan and describes how federal IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee funds will be used to accomplish the priorities in the plan. The plan also includes objectives for the Adoption Program, including how federal Adoption Incentive funds are used, and priorities for coordinating with the 11 federally recognized tribes in Wisconsin on Indian Child Welfare services.

The plan provides information on the objectives and implementation activities related to Child Welfare Services (IV-B I), Safe and Stable Families (IV-B II) program services (Family Support, Family Preservation, Time-Limited Reunification Services, Adoption Promotion and Support Services), CAPTA program services, Chafee Independent Living

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

and ETV program services, Adoption Program services, Tribal Child Welfare issues, and foster care services.

The plan includes the Annual Progress and Services Report describing activities through the current year, FFY 2006, for the IV-B, CAPTA, Chafee, Adoption, Tribal Child Welfare, and Title IV-E foster care programs. The progress report covers primarily activities by DCFS during calendar year (CY) 2005.

The DCFS operates under a comprehensive plan that establishes the priorities, strategies, and goals to carry out its mission. All requirements of 45 CFR 1357 are included within this plan.

Relationship to Child and Family Services Review

Wisconsin underwent the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) in 2003 and the federal CFSR report was received in January 2004. To address the issues identified in the CFSR, Wisconsin formed a Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) Core Team in September 2003 to begin work on a comprehensive plan to improve child welfare practice. The Core Team and other processes used for PEP input included counties, tribes, other departments, agencies or systems, consumers, advocacy groups, and other child welfare stakeholders. The work of the Core Team and other stakeholder input resulted in the Wisconsin PEP that was submitted in April 2004 and approved effective November 1, 2004. The Wisconsin PEP covers the period of November 1, 2004 through October 31, 2006.

During the PEP process, DCFS worked with stakeholders to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Wisconsin child welfare program and opportunities for improving the effectiveness of child welfare services. The strategic planning process used to identify improvement strategies for the PEP was also used to identify objectives for the Child and Family Services Plan. Through this planning process, seven overarching values were identified and all of the state objectives for the CFSP are organized based on these values. The specific action steps identified in the PEP for implementation over the 2-year period are included in the CFSP along with long-term child welfare activities not related to the scope of the CFSR.

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III. DESCRIPTION OF WISCONSIN CHILD WELFARE SERVICE SYSTEM

The child welfare service system in Wisconsin is primarily a county-operated, state-supervised system in which the state oversees the program and provides policy direction and partial funding and county human or social service departments provide child welfare services to children and families. Counties also contribute local funding to the program. Tribes are involved in child welfare services directly and may also have written agreements with county agencies.

Two facets of the child welfare system are state-operated, including the adoption program for children with special needs by the Bureau of Programs and Policies and child welfare services in Milwaukee County by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare.

County agencies and other service providers, such as community-based organizations, provide a wide variety of services to children and families. These services include programs designed to strengthen families, reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, and support and preserve families affected by abuse and neglect.

Child protective services include the investigation of child abuse and neglect, in-home services, and the removal of children from the home where necessary to protect child safety. Chapter 48 of the Wisconsin Statutes, also known as the Children's Code, governs abuse and neglect reporting and protective services and includes federal CAPTA requirements. The assessment and treatment of abuse and neglect and the removal of children from their homes are performed by child welfare agency staff based on statutory requirements and state standards.

Children enter foster (out-of-home) care through two primary avenues: child protective services and juvenile justice. Out-of-home care placements include temporary shelter care, family foster care, treatment foster care, group homes, and residential care centers. All out-of-home care providers must be licensed and pass criminal background checks.

Protective service entries into out-of-home care occur as a result of abuse or neglect where removal of children from the home and placement into out-of-home care is necessary to protect the safety of the children. Caretakers can also seek voluntary placements for children for services related to developmental disability or physical or mental health issues requiring special care. Intake of children into care is done by child welfare agency staff with court approval. Chapter 48 of the Wisconsin Statutes also governs protective service and voluntary placements.

Juvenile justice entries result as youth display uncontrollable behavior (such as running away, truancy) or commit criminal offenses that result in a delinquency adjudication. Intake of youth into care is done by child welfare agency staff or by juvenile court staff, depending on the local administrative structure. Chapter 938 of the Wisconsin Statutes, also known as the Juvenile Justice Code, governs status offenses and juvenile delinquency.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

While children are in out-of-home care, child welfare and juvenile justice agencies are responsible for permanency planning. Permanency goals include reunification where possible and appropriate, adoption, guardianship, placement with a relative, or other living arrangements (i.e., long-term foster care, sustaining care, or independent living). Children in out-of-home care who are eligible for adoption through the termination of parental rights and who have special needs or are “hard to place” are referred to the state special needs adoption program where children are matched with adoptive parents. Adoption assistance payments are made to persons who adopt children with special needs. Older children who are likely to exit out of out-of-home care receive independent living services to help them make a successful transition.

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program is designed to help children make the transition from out-of-home care to self-sufficiency. The Wisconsin program is based on the federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the findings of the June 2000 Wisconsin study entitled “Independent Living for Children in Out of Home Care.” The BMCW, counties, and tribes receive Chafee CFCIP and ETV funds to operate local service programs. Independent Living services focus on helping youth learn daily living skills, achieve a basic level of safety and well being that includes sufficient employment, housing, income, and education, and remain connected to caring adults and their communities for ongoing support. Program eligibility guidelines target youth aged 15-21 who have been in out-of-home care placement (e.g., foster home, group home, residential care center, or court-ordered Kinship Care) at least six months after the age of 15 years or older or adopted after the age of 15. Eligibility for Independent Living services ends when the youth turns 21 years of age.

The Kinship Care program is a financial assistance/child welfare program funded under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant. BMCW, counties, and tribes operate Kinship Care programs. The Kinship Care program was initiated in 1997 when the Non-Legally Responsible Relative (NLRR) component of the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was terminated. The Kinship Care program is often used as a child welfare service to allow children to remain living within their extended family structure. Kinship Care may be used to fund voluntary living arrangements with relatives as well as child welfare placements with relatives where the court has found a child to be in need of protection or services. Court-ordered Kinship Care placements account for approximately 20% of the out-of-home care caseload in Wisconsin.

IV. CHILD WELFARE OBJECTIVES FOR 2005-2009; FFY 2007 UPDATE

Wisconsin's five-year strategic objectives for improving child welfare services, as modified for the 2007-09 period, are reflected in this section of the plan. The objectives are organized based on seven overarching value statements. Under each value statement is a list of specific actions or initiatives that are or will soon be underway in partnership with counties, tribes, other departments, agencies or systems, consumers, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders connected to the child welfare service system. DCFS will implement these initiatives during the period of 2005-2009, with the implementation guided by the seven values.

The initiatives reflect the program range of child welfare and family services activities for which DCFS is responsible; consequently many of the initiatives are not directly related to the use of federal IV-B, CAPTA and Chafee funds. The specific initiatives were developed through several processes. The list includes items from the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) approved effective November 1, 2004, Governor Doyle's Kids First agenda to invest in the future of children released in May 2004, and the Tribal Child Welfare Issues originally developed in February 2004 and subsequently updated. Other actions were identified as priorities for the CFSP by DCFS working collaboratively with counties, tribes, and other stakeholders that participated in PEP development and implementation. The source of each item is identified in parentheses.

For initiatives that involve federal IV-B, CAPTA or Chafee funds, more details about specific actions are described in Section VIII of the plan. Additional information about other initiatives is described in other documents:

- The PEP plan can be found at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/cfsr/PEP.htm>.
- The Kids First agenda can be found at <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/docs/kidsfirst.pdf>.
- The Tribal Child Welfare Issues are attached to this plan.

State Objectives/Values Statements

1. Help families strengthen their capacity to provide safe and nurturing environments for their children:

- Develop criteria, policies, and procedures that are designed to increase use of relatives as placement resources. (PEP-H)
- Enhance the role of non-custodial parents and other family members as placement resources by developing policies, procedures, and tools as well as increasing staff training to support efforts to locate, adjudicate, and involve non-custodial parents. (PEP-I)
- Reduce family violence by: (Kids First)
 - Improving coordination among law enforcement, child welfare agencies, corrections, and victim service agencies to effectively assess risks and respond accordingly.
 - Developing best practice protocols and guidance for CPS staff to enhance intervention in cases where domestic violence is suspected.

- Promote family-focused child welfare case planning by further implementing the values and philosophy of coordinated service teams, revising the *Child Protective Services Ongoing Service Standards and Practice Guidelines*, developing policies and procedures, and amending pre-service training for staff and foster parents. (PEP Team, DCFS)
- Ensure culturally competent child welfare practice by recruiting and retaining bilingual and bicultural staff and foster and adoptive parents; incorporating cultural competency into existing training and developing specialized courses in assessing for cultural needs; and collaborating with organizations that serve culturally diverse client groups. (PEP Team, DCFS)

2. Improve Wisconsin's capacity to provide quality foster care to children when they cannot be safe at home:

- Stabilize placement of children in out-of-home care and reduce re-entry and placement disruptions. (PEP-C)
- Maintain and support family connections by updating and implementing policies that promote sibling group placement. (PEP-E)
- Increase the effectiveness of support for foster parents by:
 - Enhancing pre-service, foundation and ongoing training and technical assistance. (PEP-K)
 - Establishing a foster care and adoption resource center that provides telephone support and referral, training for foster care coordinators, and increased training for foster parents. (PEP-K, Kids First)
 - Developing a Foster Parent Handbook. (PEP-K)
 - Clarifying roles and responsibilities of foster parents in court hearings and permanency plan reviews. (PEP-P)
- Sustain a recruitment campaign that is consistent with the AdoptUsKids national initiative and designed to achieve a diverse ethnic representation of foster and adoptive families. (Kids First)
- Improve the foster care reimbursement structure by:
 - Increasing the basic maintenance rate. (Kids First)
 - Providing guidance concerning the ability to use the foster care exceptional rate to facilitate the placement of sibling groups. (PEP Team)
- Increase the timeliness of special needs adoptions (PEP-D and PEP-O)
- Develop the Continuous Permanency Consultation Timeline for use as a tool that will help ensure timely decisions regarding permanence for children in out of home care by outlining the key decision points, the needed decision, who must make the decision, and who is responsible to make sure the required action is taken. (PEP - D)
- Increase support for kinship providers caring for children (DCFS)
- Implement a subsidized guardianship program in Milwaukee with possible statewide expansion to other counties and to tribes. (Kids First, DCFS)

- Finalize adoptions for children needing permanent homes by providing permanency consultation, improving the timeliness of finalized adoption, and evaluating the array and effectiveness of post-adoption services. (DCFS)

3. Strengthen and diversify the child welfare workforce and build our capacity to serve families and keep children safe:

- Establish minimum pre-service and foundation training requirements for child welfare caseworkers and supervisors. (PEP-R, Kids First)
- Develop additional options for county and tribal access to child welfare training, including use of technology to meet training requirements for staff and supervisors. (PEP-R, Kids First)
- Identify and address ongoing training needs related to eWiSACWIS. (PEP-R)
- Evaluate the caseload and workload of child protective services staff and supervisor to caseworker ratios. (PEP-T)
- Research the factors contributing to turnover in the child welfare workforce and implement strategies to improve staff recruitment and retention. (Kids First, PEP Team)
- Produce a Child Welfare Policy Manual for child welfare staff. (PEP)
- Increase efforts to develop and support supervisors. (PEP)
- Meet with Schools of Social Work to establish a match between current curriculum and Child Welfare Training Partnership's foundation training to further refine equivalencies or criteria for exempting staff from required training. (PEP-R)
- Improve practice in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (DCFS)

4. Assure that the expectations of families and actions of child welfare professionals are guided by clear and comprehensive policies and standards of practice:

- Improve the safety of children and the efficiency of and consistency among child welfare programs statewide by defining the scope of CPS cases and the intake and assessment standards that guide caseworkers. (PEP-A)
- Develop Safety Intervention Standards that focus on safety assessment, safety planning, and safety management throughout the CPS case process to help children remain safely at home. (PEP-B)
- Develop an access policy for processing multiple CPS reports for the same incident or episode of alleged maltreatment. (PEP-A)
- Develop a policy to require a concurrent permanency plan no later than the first annual permanency plan review to move children more quickly to permanency. (PEP-D, PEP-O)
- Integrate the foster/adoptive family assessments into one and distribute the new assessment tool to counties for use in licensing foster and treatment foster homes under Chapters HFS 38 and 56, Adm. Code, and for the Adoption Program. (PEP-D)
- Promote interaction among family members and siblings by developing and

- implementing policy on family visitation and interaction. (PEP-F)
- Improve compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) by building DCFS capacity to implement ICWA and ensuring that all parties in the child welfare system are aware of and comply with ICWA requirements. (PEP-G, DCFS)
- Revise the *CPS Ongoing Service Standards and Practice Guidelines* regarding family assessment and case planning and convert family assessment practice guidelines to standards. (PEP-J, PEP-N)
- Develop and implement a policy on caseworker-parent/family face-to-face contact. (PEP-J)
- Pilot mental health screening tool for child welfare workers to use and develop policy on mental health screening. (PEP-M)
- Develop policies (Chapter HFS 44) relating to reasonable efforts to prevent the removal of children from their homes and to return children placed in out-of-home care to their homes when appropriate and safe or be placed in permanent and stable alternative living arrangements. (PEP-N)
- Implement the DCFS child welfare legislative agenda (including eWiSACWIS confidentiality, further implementation of ASFA, TPR process improvement, and other priority legislation). (PEP-O, Kids First)
- Increase the DCFS capacity to provide technical assistance to local child welfare agencies to support improved case practice, policy implementation, and regional collaboration. (PEP-S)
- Review the current use of “substantiating” child abuse and neglect and its ongoing practicality in Wisconsin’s child welfare system. (PEP)
- Revise the CPS role in non-caregiver maltreatment. (PEP)
- Develop a process and protocol for conducting reviews of cases involving the death or serious injury of children due to maltreatment and the involvement of children in egregious incidents. (DCFS)

5. Collaborate with agencies and systems to improve family access to services that ensure children are safe and healthy:

- Pilot a managed care program in Milwaukee that will provide every child entering foster care with mental, physical, and dental health care. (PEP-L)
- Assess the capacity of the Wisconsin child welfare system to respond effectively to the safety and permanency needs of children. (PEP-T)
- Expand MA eligibility for youth exiting out-of-home care at age 18 or older up to age 21 to ensure ongoing health insurance coverage. (Kids First)
- Increase Independent Living Program scholarships to \$5,000 per youth per year as long as other scholarship eligibility criteria (e.g., satisfactory progress) are met. (DCFS)
- Help youth transition to self-sufficiency by continuing to provide an array of services and supports that address secondary and post-secondary education, vocational and employment training, daily living skills, housing, connection to

- caring adults, health education, and risk prevention. (DCFS)
- Build Independent Living Program capacity to provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other supports and services to former foster care youth aged 18-21. (DCFS)
- Strengthen coordination with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) on W-2 (TANF) services to families involved in the child welfare service system. (Kids First, PEP Team)
- Establish multi-agency work groups with other agencies and service systems to improve service delivery to children and families. (PEP Team)
- Improve mental health services for children served by the child welfare system. (DCFS)
- Improve availability of and access to AODA and other services for birth parents. (DCFS)
- Collaborate with the Department of Corrections (DOC) on services to juveniles and their families. (DCFS)
- Expand Chafee Foster Care Independence and Education and Training Voucher programs to include additional tribes. (DCFS)
- Sustain the partnership with counties, tribes, advocates, consumers, and other stakeholders to improve child welfare outcomes through membership on or other involvement with: (DCFS)
 - Child Welfare Program Enhancement Plan Implementation Team
 - Milwaukee Partnership Council
 - Citizen Review Panels

6. Improve the quality and usefulness of information needed to evaluate safety, permanence, and well being of children:

- Improve the management of child welfare information systems and reporting of child welfare program data. (PEP-Q, DCFS, PEP Team)
 - Obtain federal certification of the eWiSACWIS system.
 - Integrate management of eWiSACWIS system into DCFS.
 - Develop a comprehensive eWiSACWIS training program.
 - Develop child welfare program performance indicators.
 - Support local agency use of eWiSACWIS data reports.
 - Improve quality of federal AFCARS and NCANDS reporting.
 - Begin submitting the NCANDS child file.

7. Assure the quality and effectiveness of services for children and families by regularly reviewing our programs and practices:

- Establish a statewide child welfare quality assurance (QA) program to improve practice and accountability. (PEP-Q, Kids First)
 - Implement Quality Service Review process for agency reviews using a case review tool and peer reviewers.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- Coordination of statewide and Milwaukee case review processes.
- Program reviews and special studies.
- QA feedback into policy development.
- Technical assistance to child welfare agencies from DCFS.
- Implement an ombudsman program for children served by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (Kids First)
- Ensure compliance with federal and Legislative Audit Bureau Title IV-E eligibility reviews. (DCFS)

V. ANNUAL SERVICES AND PROGRESS REPORT, FFY 2007 UPDATE

Progress on Objectives in 2005-2009 Plan

The DCFS established several objectives in the CFSP for 2005-2009 supporting the quality, timeliness, and responsiveness of child welfare services across Wisconsin. The annual progress report includes information on accomplishments of these objectives during FFY 2006, with an emphasis on activities during calendar year (CY 2005). The progress report is divided into sections dealing with the seven overarching child welfare program goals for 2005-2009, specific program updates, and the seven systemic factors for the federal CFSR process. Some of the activities related to the overarching goals are included in the program updates or systemic factors where appropriate.

Child Welfare Program Goals

1. Help families strengthen their capacity to provide safe and nurturing environments for their children:

- The above goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Steps B, H, I and J, and R. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide specific information for each of these items.
- Action step J is related to the Ongoing Standards and Practice Guidelines, Roundtables with CPS caseworkers regarding barriers to engagement, and the caseworker contact policy. As part of the PEP renegotiation items, the Ongoing Standards will be deferred until 2009, after completion of the engagement and contact policies.
- Action step H.3., related to Relative Safety Assessments, is part of the Safety Intervention Standards issued in May 2006, DCFS Numbered Memo 2006-09. As part of the PEP renegotiation items, technical assistance will be provided 4/07 – 6/07.
- Action step H.1. and I.1., is related to policy development and tools for workers to use in the identification and involvement of relatives and noncustodial parents. As part of the PEP renegotiation items the resource guide will be issued by 1/07 and technical assistance provided 1/07 – 3/07.
- DCFS is working with the Governor's Office, the Department of Justice, child welfare professionals, and domestic violence service providers to take actions to reduce family violence. PEP sub-committees have included protocols and guidelines related to domestic violence in policies that are being developed or revised. The Child Protective Services Access Standard for Receipt and Analysis of Report Information, issued in November of 2005, includes a requirement that the agency inquire about possible domestic violence from reporters in all cases. The standard also includes an appendix entitled "Sample Questions to Ask Reporter to Assess for Presence of Domestic Violence in the Home. The policy Family Interaction for Child Protective Services Cases When a Child is in Out-Of-Home Care was issued in July of 2005 and updated in March of 2006. It contains an appendix entitled "Considerations in Cases with Domestic Violence". The

policy Caseworker-Parent/Family Face-To-Face Contact for Child Protective Services Cases, issued in October of 2005, also includes considerations for cases with domestic violence.

- DCFS continues to promote and provide support and technical assistance in working with the Division of Disabilities and Elder Support to expand the Coordinated Service Team initiative to case planning and intervention with families and uses IV-B Subpart II funds for this project.
- DCFS continues to emphasize cultural competence in the recruitment and training of child welfare staff and foster/adoptive parents.
- DCFS promotes family-focused child welfare case planning by further implementing the values and philosophy of coordinated service teams, revising the Child Protective Services Ongoing Service Standards and Practice Guidelines, developing policies and procedures, and amending pre-service training for staff and foster parents. Newly developed pre-service modules include content and instruction on family focused child welfare and the development of coordinated service teams when working with families. (PEP-R)
- The Safety Intervention Standards, effective July 2006, help child welfare staff work together with families to focus on a family's strengths, identified needs and development of goals around the parent's identified protective capacity and the need to enhance those capacities that may be diminished resulting in a child being unsafe. (PEP-B)

2. Improve Wisconsin's capacity to provide quality foster care to children when they cannot be safe at home:

- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Steps C, D, E, K, O, and P. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide information for each of these items.
- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Step C.1.b related to Trial Home Visits, however, due to necessary changes in eWiSACWIS the policy will now be issued in Q8 of the PEP and effective 1/07 with inclusion in Ongoing training by 4/07.
- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP D.5. The new SAFE home study document is scheduled to be completed in eWiSACWIS by September 2006 and SNAP, BMCW and county agency staff will be trained during Quarter 8.
- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Step E.3, which will increase the limit for siblings that can be placed together in the same foster home. This is a PEP renegotiation item requiring a change to HFS 56, which will be effective 1/08.
- This goal is addressed by the implementation of PEP K.4. The Training Council endorsed the guiding principles and six goals and the ideas to develop preservice, foundation, and ongoing foster parent training as they relate to foster parents, Treatment Foster Parents, and adoptive parents.
- This goal is addressed by the implementation of PEP K.5. The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center staff completed the first official draft of the handbook in Quarter 6 and, at the end of April, sent the draft to John McMahon, a writer and editor for the School of Social Work in North Carolina, for editing.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- DCFS is working with AdoptUsKids national initiative to increase the number and diversity of foster/adoptive families.
- The basic foster care rate was increased on a permanent basis in 2006 and DCFS is exploring ways to use the rate structure to better support placements. (KidsFirst)
- DCFS INFO MEMO 2006 -01 was issued on January 17, 2006 to promote the placement of siblings together in foster care and clarify the ability of agencies to use the foster care exceptional rate to facilitate the placement of sibling groups. (Pep-E)
- DCFS has improved the effectiveness of permanency planning through full time State Permanency Consultants. (PEP-D)
- In October 2005, a subsidized guardianship program was implemented in Milwaukee. The program will be evaluated regarding possible expansion to other counties and tribes. (Kids First, DCFS)
- The contract for the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center was issued on January 1, 2006 and opened for services April 2006. (PEP-K, KidsFirst)

3. Strengthen and diversify the child welfare workforce and build our capacity to serve families and keep children safe:

- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Steps R and T. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide information for each of these items.
- A training Administrative Rule will be promulgated in Quarter 8 and will include training requirements for pre-service, foundation, and ongoing training for child welfare caseworkers and supervisors. Staff from DCFS, tribes, counties, and the Training Partnerships developed the requirements of the Administrative Rule.
- DCFS is working with the Training Partnerships to expand both the type of training provided and the ways in which training can be delivered. DCFS also has a contract with Dolt (an entity of the University of Wisconsin) to create web-based pre-service training, and the Training Partnerships are utilizing web casts and other distance learning methods to provide training/information.
- DCFS is meeting with Schools of Social Work to establish a match between current curriculum and Child Welfare Training Partnership's foundation training to further refine equivalencies or criteria for exempting staff from required training. This item is included in the renegotiation of the PEP, as it is a long-term process that will entail in-depth discussions and work to incorporate foundation and ICWA training content into the Child Welfare Social Work Curriculum. A workgroup to address this will meet in 10/07. (PEP R.2.)
- DCFS continues to identify and address ongoing training needs related to eWiSACWIS. An ad hoc committee comprised of county, state, and Training Partnership staff meets regularly to identify and define ongoing training needs related to the automated system.
- DCFS is working with national consultants to address workforce development for the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and statewide.
- DCFS continues to develop and support the practice skills of child welfare staff and supervisors. DCFS staff conduct regional roundtables and attend regional CPS supervisors' meetings to provide information and technical assistance to supervisors in an effort to implement new policies and support casework practice.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- Initiatives undertaken by DCFS to improve practice at the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare include:
 - Increased salaries for Ongoing Case Managers and Supervisors (4th Quarter of 2005)
 - Strengthened training curriculum for direct services staff
 - Expanded part-time MSW program and continued full-time program
 - Data-based quality improvement is working with nationally-recognized child welfare expert beginning long-term quality improvement approach involving Milwaukee (4th Quarter of 2005)
 - Began initiative to recruit, train, and support quality foster families by collaborating with faith-based groups to develop new approaches (4th Quarter of 2005)

4. Assure that the expectations of families and actions of child welfare professionals are guided by clear and comprehensive policies and standards of practice:

- Implementation of PEP Action Steps A, B, D, F, G, J, M, N, O, and S address this goal. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide information for each of these items.
- DCFS will continue to work with counties and other stakeholders to evaluate child maltreatment case findings and the role of child protective services, particularly for incidences of non-caregiver maltreatment. A comprehensive revision of the CPS Investigation Standards will be completed by June of 2007 with training and technical assistance from 4/07 – 6/07, as part of the PEP renegotiations. These revisions will include clearer requirements in primary and secondary cases as well as address changes to non-caregiver investigations based on a revision to the statutes and case determinations in child abuse and neglect investigations. Additionally, DCFS will explore ways to implement a differential response approach to CPS cases as it examines substantiation issues. A recent statutory change regarding the CPS role in non-caregiver maltreatment will be included in the integrated revisions to the CPS Investigation Standards. (PEP-A.2.)
- DCFS will continue to work to improve child welfare policy and practice at the state, county and other levels. In December of 2005, DCFS Memo Series 2006-16, “Notification of Cases of Abuse or Neglect Involving Death, Serious Injury, or Egregious Incidents,” became effective. The policy includes the protocol that DCFS will use to assess the need for a review and the objectives and process for a review.
- The Child Protective Services Access Standard for Receipt and Analysis of Report Information was issued in November of 2005 and became effective in March of 2006. This Standard outlines requirements at CPS Access for receiving and responding to reports of child maltreatment. In addition, the Standard defines the scope of CPS in Wisconsin. (PEP-A)
- This goal will also be addressed through revisions to the Ongoing Services Standards, which will be deferred until 2009 as part of the PEP renegotiation process. These Standards will go into effect after the revised CPS Investigation Standards and Ch. HFS 44 have been issued since the Ongoing Standard builds upon those policies. (PEP-A)

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- The Safety Intervention Standards were issued in Quarter 6 of the PEP and become effective in July 2006. These Standards include requirements for safety management from initial assessment through case closure and also include requirements for assessing safety in unlicensed and licensed homes when a child is placed in out-of-home care as part of a protective or safety plan. (PEP-B)
- The Continuous Permanency Planning Timeline document for staff to use as a guideline in meeting the action step for "increasing the timeliness of placing children in permanent or adoptive homes when they can no longer be safe with their parents" was issued in December of 2005 as DCFS Memo Series 2005-12. (PEP-D and O)
- In October of 2005, DCFS Memo Series 2005-06, "Family Interaction for Child Protective Services Cases When a Child is Placed in Out-of-Home Care," became effective. This policy provides standards and supplemental information to caseworkers to assist in maintaining attachments between children and their families when children are placed in out-of-home care. (PEP-F)
- This goal is addressed in PEP G.1, ICWA Legislation and requires ICWA to be included in Wisconsin Statutes. As part of the PEP renegotiation items, DCFS will pursue the proposal in the next legislative session.
- In January of 2006, DCFS Memo Series 2005-10, "Caseworker-Parent/Family Face-to-Face Contact for Child Protective Services Cases," became effective. This policy provides standards of practice and supplemental information to caseworkers to assist in providing face-to-face contact with children and families. (PEP-J)
- This goal will also be addressed through implementation of a pilot mental health screening tool for use by child welfare workers and the development of policy on mental health screening. As part of the PEP renegotiation process the pilots will begin in 2006 and at least one year should be allowed prior to data analysis, with evaluation of pilot information in early 2008 to determine next steps. (PEP-M.1)
- This goal will also be addressed through promulgation of Permanency Planning Rule HFS 44, which is a PEP renegotiation item that has a new implementation date of 1/08 for the rule to take effect, as the promulgation of the rule will take longer and eWiSACWIS changes may be necessary. Extensive training and technical assistance will be needed for implementation. (PEP-N.1)
- Through the availability of funding for the PEP, DCFS can provide increased technical assistance to local agencies. DCFS added five (5) new policy positions to enhance Division capacity to provide technical assistance. These include two CPS Specialists, one Indian Child Welfare Consultant, one Case Practice Consultant, and one Legislative Consultant. (PEP-S)

5. Collaborate with agencies and systems to improve family access to services that ensure children are safe and healthy:

- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Steps L and T. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide information for each of these items.
- DCFS has expanded Independent Living program scholarships and will continue to seek legislative approval to expand Medical Assistance eligibility for youth aging out of out-of-home care. DCFS has increased the maximum amount of the scholarship to \$5,000 per year.

- DCFS is collaborating with the Departments of Workforce Development and Corrections to coordinate child welfare and other services to low income families.
 - DCFS is committed to sustaining partnerships with counties, tribes and other stakeholders through an inclusionary approach to program management and the use of advisory committees.
 - This goal is addressed through PEP action step L.1. DCFS plans to implement a managed health care plan in Milwaukee County. Due to changes to the original waiver, the State submitted an amended waiver to the federal authorities at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The State recently learned that the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will not approve that portion of the waiver that provides for comprehensive case management. However, this does not change our goal to assure that every single child has quality comprehensive physical, mental health and dental care across all developmental states, from infant to young adult. This did necessitate the cancellation of the sole source RFP/contracting process with Abri Health Care. The State plans to move forward by:
 - Appointing a full-time chief medical officer for BMCW;
 - Developing a Medical Home partnership model for serving BMCW foster children;
 - Seeking agreements with any willing and able HMO, and be willing to use Fee for Service arrangement with Federally Qualified Health Centers, to deliver health care consistent with the medical home model;
 - Provide enhanced reimbursement for behavioral health services tied to performance;
 - Build into the Medical Home model other substantive health care needs and improvements identified by the Advisory Committee; and
 - Move forward expeditiously by focusing on the immediate need to improve care for specific children where care is inadequate, and also pursue a systematic longer term approach to bring all foster children into the Medical Home model over time.
 - The DCFS is collaborating with the Milwaukee Partnership Council, which is comprised of an Executive Committee and four sub-committees. In 2005 the Milwaukee Partnership Council established by-laws for the council meetings and has been instrumental in advocating for budget and workforce issues facing Ongoing Case Management within BMCW. Its sub-committees are working on issues related to Adoption, Out of Home Care, Cross-system collaboration, Health Care and Access, Initial Assessment and Safety Services.
- 6. *Improve the quality and usefulness of information needed to evaluate safety, permanence, and well being of children:***
- DCFS is continuing to improve the quality of child welfare program data for federal reporting and state purposes.
 - DCFS completed statewide rollout of the eWiSACWIS system in July 2004 and will continue to provide support to system users to improve efficiency of system operation.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- DCFS had an initial federal SACWIS review in September 2004 and is working toward federal certification of the eWiSACWIS system.
- DCFS implemented a comprehensive placement manual in January 2005 and will update the manual on an annual basis to improve reporting of placement for permanency measures and federal AFCARS purposes.
- DCFS implemented a series of eWiSACWIS reports to provide agencies with performance information on the safety, permanency, and well being of children.
- DCFS implemented a Reports Dashboard in June 2005 to make performance information available in a graphical format.
- DCFS will undergo a federal AFCARS review in July 2006.
- DCFS will submit the NCANDS child file beginning in March 2006 with the FFY 2005 file.

7. Assure the quality and effectiveness of services for children and families by regularly reviewing our programs and practices:

- This goal is addressed by implementation of PEP Action Step Q. The PEP Quarterly Reports provide information for this item.
- As part of Governor Jim Doyle's KidsFirst Initiative of improving the child welfare system in Wisconsin, DCFS implemented the first statewide continuous quality improvement program. The county child welfare reviews will provide the counties and the Division with valuable information on the strengths and opportunities for enhancing child welfare case practice. Through April, 2006, the Division has conducted reviews in nine counties. It is anticipated that the Division will conduct child welfare reviews in 15 counties per year.
- Fifty-six persons from the counties, state, and child welfare contract agencies have been trained to eventually become lead case reviewers using the Quality Service Review (QSR) protocol.
- Of the aforementioned fifty-six persons, 11 have been certified as lead case reviewers to date.
- Fifteen additional persons have been trained for the primary role of observing lead case reviewers.
- In June 2005 the 5 Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Specialists completed a review of 200 cases from 4 counties to identify factors that contributed to high re-entry rates and low rates of placement stability. The results from the review were analyzed by the Office of Program Evaluation and Planning (OPEP) and distributed in a report to the 4 counties. It also provided a basis for eWiSACWIS data entry guidelines to all counties related to the documentation of shelter care placements. [See PEP Matrix Tasks C.1.a & b Re-entry to Placement and C.2.a & b Placement Stability]
- DCFS implemented an ombudsman program for families served by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare in June 2005.
- Wisconsin passed a federal Title IV-E eligibility secondary review in May 2005.
- DCFS has resolved Title IV-E eligibility issues identified by the LAB for the BMCW foster care program and is working on resolving issues for the Adoption Assistance program.

Title IV-B Subpart I - Child Welfare Services

Title IV-B Subpart I is a federal block grant that can be used for a broad range of child welfare services. In Wisconsin, Subpart 1 funds are used for the Community Aids, Youth Aids, and Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs. A small amount of Subpart I funds are also used for DCFS state program operations.

Community Aids

The Community Aids program is the state mechanism to provide county human and social service agencies in Wisconsin with funds for a variety of human services. Community aids is allocated to counties under a basic county allocation and five separate, categorical allocations. In calendar year 2005, counties received \$261.3 million in Community Aids, with \$241.6 million allocated under the basic county allocation. The largest single funding source for Community Aids is state General Purpose Revenues (GPR). Federal funds are also included in the basic county allocation: Title IV-E foster care reimbursement expenses earned based on expenses incurred by the state and counties, the Social Service Block Grant (SSBG), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) transferred to SSBG, and \$3.46 million of Title IV-B Subpart I Child Welfare Services.

The Community Aids funds are used by county agencies for child welfare services and other services to children and families. Counties are required to provide a local match to Community Aids, with most counties providing more than the minimum amount of match. The county match is the primary source of state match for the IV-B Subpart 1 funds.

Counties have considerable flexibility in determining how much Community Aids funding to allocate for each type of human service. Counties must provide human services to persons who receive federal and state payments for supplemental security income and those who would be eligible for the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, but the types of services are not specified in state statute.

The DHFS uses several tools to monitor and assess county human services programs. The State and counties enter into a contract covering the administration of the Community Aids program. Client service information is reported through the Human Services Reporting System (HSRS) with some client information reported through eWiSACWIS. Expenditure information is reported by client group through the Community Aids Reporting System (CARS).

Progress report: The Community Aids program was continued in 2005 with no major changes. The amount of IV-B Subpart I funds allocated to Community Aids was essentially the same as prior years, with the amount slightly less due to decreases in the overall IV-B Subpart I grant award. The following table shows the total clients served and expenditures for human services. While the expenditures reflect all sources (including Medicaid), the Abused and Neglected Children and Children and Family target groups reflect primarily Community Aids and local county tax levy funds.

**Human Services Clients Served and Expenditures
Calendar Year 2004
By Target Group**

	Clients		Expenditures	
	Number	Percent of Total	Amount (In millions)	Percent of Total
Developmentally Disabled	39,612	11.8%	\$575.1	33.1%
Mental Health	93,560	28	344.4	19.8
Substance Abuse	62,510	18.7	78.4	4.5
Physically and Sensory Disabled	9,419	2.8	85.4	4.9
Delinquent and Status Offenders	28,810	8.6	192.8	11.1
Abused and Neglected Children	30,867	9.2	203.8	11.7
Children and Families	31,326	9.3	70.9	4.0
Adults and the Elderly	38,976	11.6	189.2	10.9
Total	335,080	100.00%	\$1,740	100.0%

A description of the Community Aids program is available at:

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb/Informationalpapers/47.pdf>

Youth Aids

The Community Youth and Family Aids (Youth Aids) program provides funding to county human and social service agencies for community-based juvenile justice services. Eligible services include community-based services for juvenile delinquents and status offenders (truants, runaways and uncontrollable youth) and out of home placements. Counties may also use Youth Aids funds to pay costs for youth placed in juvenile correctional facilities. For CY 2005, counties received \$88.3 million of Youth Aids funds, which includes \$85.8 million GPR and \$2.45 million of other funds, including \$1.1 million of IV-B Subpart I funds and \$1.35 million of Title IV-E reimbursement, earned from county expenses. DCFS has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Corrections for how the IV-B and IV-E funds are used for juvenile justice services, including requirements to provide Title IV-E protections for all juvenile justice clients in out-of-home care.

The Title IV-B funds are included in Youth Aids to give county agencies resources to provide child welfare services to the juvenile population, including community services to prevent placement and post-placement aftercare services. Counties may use the Youth Aids funds to provide human services to youth and their families. Counties are required to provide a local match for Youth Aids, similar to Community Aids funds.

Progress report: The Youth Aids program was continued in 2005 with no major changes. The amount of IV-B Subpart I funds allocated to Youth Aids was essentially the same as

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

prior years, with the amount slightly less due to decreases in the overall IV-B Subpart I grant award. The table above shows the total clients served and expenditures for human services, including the Juvenile Justice population. While the expenditures reflect all sources (including Medicaid), the Juvenile Justice target group reflects primarily Youth Aids and local county tax levy funds.

A description of the Youth Aids program is available at:

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb/Informationalpapers/55.pdf>

Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Program

Subpart I funds are used, along with other state, local, and federal funds, to support services to 23 runaway and homeless youth programs and seven Second Chance Homes throughout the state. The goals of the Runaway Services Program are to strengthen families, prevent family dissolution, promote self-sufficiency, and assure permanent, stable homes for youth. Services provided as part of the Runaway Program include a 24-hour crisis intervention hotline and safe shelter, counseling for youth and families, and education, prevention, outreach, and aftercare services to youth and their families.

2001 Wisconsin Act 69, which took effect April 26, 2002, provides for the licensing of Second Chance group homes for teen parents and expectant mothers in need of safe and structured living arrangements. The law was enacted in response to the rising number of teen mothers who need shelter and assistance in raising their newborns while attempting to finish school and obtain stable employment to support themselves and their children. Second Chance Homes are supervised, nurturing residences for teen custodial parents who have no other place to go. In most cases, these teens have experienced abuse, neglect, substance abuse, or other difficult circumstances in their families-of-origin, making it impossible for them to remain at home. Second-chance homes are designed to provide them the services they need to become self-sufficient and caring parents. The homes help young parents complete their education, secure sound employment, break the cycle of child neglect and abuse, and set goals for a more promising future.

Progress Report: During 2005, Wisconsin's runaway programs served over 3034 youth face-to-face, provided over 1859 families with counseling, supplied temporary shelter for approximately 1370 youth and received 16,946 telephone contacts from troubled youth. Of the youth personally counseled, at least 93.14% were either reunited with their family or placed in a mutually agreed upon living situation.

In 2004, the Wisconsin Association for Runaway Services was given a grant for \$13,500, to provide a statewide project in 2005 to increase staff awareness, sensitivity and capacity to serve lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans-gendered and questioning (LGBTQ) youth and to further emotionally safe environments for LGBTQ youth to access and receive services.

The association has worked extensively with runaway and homeless youth agencies, providing materials and sensitivity training to runaway programs and homeless pregnant and parenting teen service providers in Wisconsin, involving LGBTQ youth from the onset of the project in both program and material design and project implementation.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

As part of the project, WAHRS sponsored a training that was held in Northeastern Wisconsin. There were 41 attendees, including 3 youth who presented on a panel. The participants represented 21 of the 23 runaway programs in the state.

IV-B Subpart II - Promoting Safe and Stable Families

Introduction

The Wisconsin Program for Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) is administered by the BPP and has four components: family preservation, family support, time-limited-reunification services, and adoption promotion and support. The first three are delivered or arranged for by county agencies. Adoption promotion and support services are provided at the state level through the BPP Adoption Program, and a small portion of the grant is used to fund statewide activities.

Subpart II funds are allocated to counties to operate local PSSF programs. These local PSSF programs operate throughout the state in a decentralized manner. In several counties, the PSSF program is incorporated into the Brighter Futures Initiative (BFI), which focuses on improving outcomes for children and families through prevention efforts involving funds from several sources. Building on local collaboration and community-wide planning efforts, PSSF program service delivery involves various stakeholders within each of the counties. Wisconsin continues to work with counties to strengthen collaborative efforts and leverage additional dollars at the local level.

While local operation of the PSSF program is a cornerstone of its unique implementation in Wisconsin, each local agency under contract with the state is responsible for meeting the following requirements:

- Provision of family preservation, family support, and time-limited reunification services designed to promote child and family well-being. To meet the IV-B Subpart II fiscal requirements for preservation, support, and reunification services, local agencies are required to dedicate the required portion of their total PSSF program funds to each of the three service areas.
- Development of implementation plans that include measurable outcomes that meet funding allocations for support, preservation and reunification, as defined by the federal requirements.
- Comprehensive, active involvement of multiple stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.
- Submission of an annual report that includes levels of achievement in meeting their identified outcome measures and an expenditure report showing actual expenditures in support, preservation, and reunification. Counties are required to submit outcome results annually for children and families receiving services that are funded with the PSSF grant. At the conclusion of the three-year plan, outcomes will be reviewed on a countywide basis to assess the effectiveness of current activities and to aid in the development of the next three-year plan.

The adoption component of PSSF is delivered by the state Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) and PSSF funds are combined with other state and federal dollars to

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

locate families to provide safe, permanent homes for children who cannot achieve permanence with their biological parents. The progress report and plan for the adoption component of PSSF can be found in the adoption section of this plan.

Program Funding and Planning

Wisconsin also provides state funding in the form of the IV-E Incentive program to counties for activities that will improve outcomes for children and families. Services provided by this program are consistent with, or complement, services eligible for PSSF funding. Most counties submit joint PSSF/IV-E Incentive plans. The IV-E Incentive program allocates discretionary IV-E revenue claimed by the state to county child welfare agencies to provide prevention and intervention programming for children, youth, and families.

- In 2005, Wisconsin increased county allocations by formula and completed the following goals: 1) to have allocations be equitably based on the number of children residing in each county, 2) to hold counties harmless if the child population decreased their allocation, and 3) increase minimal allocations for all counties from \$15,000 to \$35,000 and increase the maximum allocation from \$75,000 to \$100,000. In other words, DCFS wanted to ensure that no county suffered a reduction in funds with the application of the new allocation formula. In addition to implementing the reallocation, all counties received an increase of 3% for CY 2005. This increase in PSSF funding to counties has allowed counties to enhance programs, increase services levels, and /or add new programs. While these new funds are important to all counties, they are particularly important to rural, sparsely populated counties that have limited resources.
- Counties completed a three-year plan in late 2004 covering the period of CY 2005 – 2007 for the proposed use of PSSF funds and IV-E Incentive funds. These plans were implemented beginning in 2005 and individual county reports providing both budget information and outcome data will be submitted in 2006. Counties collect and report on individual outcomes on an annual basis and will provide and evaluate countywide data at the end of the three-year plan. With the implementation of eWiSACWIS, Wisconsin's electronic case management and data collection system, both the state and counties have access to more current data than has been available in the past.

PSSF Program Progress Report

The focus of the Wisconsin PSSF program has been to ensure that program services improve outcomes for all children and families in Wisconsin, but especially for those that are in the child welfare system or at high risk of entering the system. As new child welfare policies, standards, and procedures are developed and implemented statewide (with the goal of improving safety, permanence, and the well being of children and families), PSSF service providers are expected to coordinate services and target populations in ways that improve child welfare program outcomes.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- In calendar year 2005, over 33,000 children and 31,000 families received PSSF preservation, support, or reunification services from county agencies. The numbers served are down from prior years because counties are using this funding to provide more intensive family based, wraparound preservation and reunification services focusing on safety and permanency. Based on reports that compare actual outcomes with desired outcomes for the children and families served with this funding, counties are, for the most part, meeting or exceeding their outcome goals. At the end of the 2005-2007 planning cycle, DCFS will be reviewing and reporting on countywide safety, permanency, and well-being outcome data. As in prior years, these numbers do not include Brighter Futures Counties.
- The 2001 PSSF program amendments encouraged states to provide services to strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages under the family support services portion of the PSSF program. PSSF program operators have been advised they can use PSSF funds for services to strengthen families. The 2005-2007 county PSSF plans expand family based services and planning in order to strengthen families. As outcome training has also been provided to local programs, counties have become much more proficient in: 1) using a results-based approach in developing local plans and identifying “what works.” and 2) identifying what programs achieve the best results for the children and families they serve. Counties are now taking the next steps and are using these results in reviewing contracted services to make funding decisions. In the 2005-2007 county PSSF plans, there was significant realignment of how the funding is being used. Counties increased using a family-based, coordinated approach, and other system enhancements, as identified in the PEP for the delivery of child welfare services.
- In addition to funding for county delivered programs/services, Wisconsin supports a limited number of state-wide programs that support and enhance local efforts to improve child welfare outcomes:

Tribal Training: DCFS contracts for training to improve case practice as it improves outcomes for children by identifying Indian Children that enter the child welfare system and increases cross system collaboration between tribal child welfare and state/county child welfare systems as it relates to the Indian Child Welfare Act. The Intertribal Child Welfare Training Partnership began operations in 2005.

Coordinated Services Teams: PSSF has partnered with other DHFS programs to provide funding for the Coordinated Services Team Initiative (CST). The CST approach promotes a system change in the way services are delivered to children and families involved in the child welfare, mental health, and substance abuse systems. Funding, training, and technical assistance are provided to counties to maximize the use of existing resources that support collaborative efforts resulting in a clear vision, meaningful structural change, and measurable outcomes for children and their families across systems. Currently, 36 counties have implemented Coordinated Services Teams, Integrated Service Projects, or Managed Care approaches. This program continues to expand to more counties and several counties are including expanded

CST programs in their 2005-2007 PSSF/IV-E Incentive Plans. One additional county will implement CST in 07/06, another in 10/06, and one county is receiving training and technical assistance to develop a CST. Seven additional sites have applied for funding.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (POCAN) Training: In 1997, legislation established POCAN projects around the state. POCAN is designed to serve Medicaid eligible first-time mothers through home visitation. This program is a joint effort of the Division of Public Health (DPH) and the Division of Children and Family Services (both are located in DHFS). The DPH provides program funding and administration, while DCFS provides training and technical assistance, as well as additional funding and oversight. Areas of training include parent-child interaction, basic and advanced skill training for home visitors, brain development, Medicaid eligibility, Boundaries Training, Parenting Toddlers, Nutrition for Young Children, and a wide variety of other topics that research and project staff determine to be of value. Several workshops provide knowledge and skills needed to work with families impacted by domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness and poverty. This training is also available to appropriate staff from non-POCAN counties and programs. In 2005, nearly 500 attendees participated in 30 training events.

Projects Receiving One-Time Funding

Wisconsin received an increase in the PSSF federal grant in FFY 2004, but due to the timing of the notice and efforts needed to determine and implement a new allocation formula for counties, the increase in funding to counties did not take place until CY 2005. Wisconsin used the increase in the 2004 PSSF award for several statewide activities identified in the PEP to enhance the safety, permanency and well being of children in Wisconsin. DCFS provided one-time PSSF funding to the following programs/initiatives:

Electronic Child Welfare Manual: DCFS (and its organizational antecedents) have developed child welfare policy and distributed those policies to county and other agencies through hard-copy “numbered memos.” In most agencies, policies related to child welfare and other programs are most often organized chronologically rather than programmatically. This has resulted in confusion and lack of knowledge about the existence of certain policies. In addition, the PEP has resulted in the proliferation of many additional policies and standards. In order to make the promulgation of child welfare policies more manageable, DCFS is in the process of codifying such policies into a “Child Welfare Handbook”. The handbook will facilitate the ability of child welfare managers, supervisors, caseworkers, and others to know and understand current and on-going modifications to state policies related to child welfare.

In addition, DCFS is also proposing to incorporate the handbook, into eWiSACWIS, once it is completed. The goal is to ensure that policies can be immediately accessed by child welfare caseworkers as they are working on various aspects of their cases.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Hyperlinks will be created in eWiSACWIS to allow caseworkers the ability immediately access policies relevant to their current activities.

Female Offender Re-Entry Pilot: The Female Offender Reentry Program (FOREP) enhances the Wiser Choice program in Milwaukee County (a federal three year substance abuse treatment grant) to target women with dependent children who have a substance use disorder and have committed a non-violent offense. The enhanced services are intended to support the efforts of formerly incarcerated mothers to successfully re-enter the community and reunite with their children. The primary difference between the FOREP and Wiser Choice is that many FOREP's activities occur while the offender is still incarcerated. The main focus is on preparation for reentry while incarcerated. These re-entry supports include reach-in care coordination, children's visitation and mental health services and support, and the development of integrated/wraparound supports, community based treatment and recovery support services, and family reunification.

Continuous Quality Improvement Unit: In response to the Federal CFSR, the Wisconsin PEP included the design and implementation of a comprehensive statewide Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system. The purpose of the CQI system is to identify strengths and problem areas in county child welfare programs and then provide the technical assistance and support needed to enhance Wisconsin's child welfare program. The CQI initiative reflects the evaluative system Wisconsin chose to implement, and is comprised of a system of qualitative measurements of compliance oriented activities. Wisconsin has chosen to embrace an evaluative process, which focuses on outcomes, as measured by qualitative indicators. While CQI has its own source of funding, the demand for reviews was so high among the counties, PSSF funds were used to support the review process by developing the peer reviewers needed for reviews.

Foster Parent Handbook: Because Wisconsin is a state-supervised/county administered system, each of the seventy-two counties, the state adoption program, and private foster care and adoption agencies are authorized to license foster homes and to place children in those homes. The DHFS creates the licensing rule, but allows significant flexibility among agencies in terms of the operation of their foster care and adoption programs, and subsequently, in their relationships with the foster parents they license. While this type of flexibility is generally an asset, there are areas where statewide uniformity is necessary. As a result, the Division is working with the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center to develop a statewide "model" foster parent handbook as part of PEP Action Step K.5. The handbook will incorporate policies and practices that should be implemented in all foster care and adoption programs, yet each licensing agency will also have the option to "localize" certain aspects of the handbook in order to reflect the specific business practices it employs.

Fatherhood Awareness: DHFS contracted with a specialist on "fatherhood issues" to hold focus groups with fathers around the state to identify barriers and challenges

faced by fathers in dealing with the child welfare system. This information is being used when writing state standards, policies and procedures, and training so that caseworkers are more knowledgeable and effective in dealing with all fathers, particularly single parent and/or non-custodial fathers.

PSSF Program Goals

Programmatically, both state and county agencies share the goals of improving safety, permanency and well being for the children of Wisconsin, through the implementation of systems improvements, and funding service delivery and program costs that provide measurable positive outcomes for children and families. Data from 2005 county annual reports will provide the Division with information regarding individual outcomes and program results.

With the availability of information from eWiSACWIS, it is our goal to collect and review countywide data relating to safety, permanency and well being. DCFS will be looking at items such as: rate of recurrence of child maltreatment, number of children re-entering out-of-home care, length of time children spend in out of home care per episode, and reunification results. Baselines will be determined using 2005 data, and in turn, data will be collected annually to be used for final reporting at end of the 2005-2007 county plan cycle and as the basis for measuring improvement in programs/activities for the next plan cycle (2008-2010).

Note: Certain cautions need to be exercised in the interpretation of countywide child welfare data, as it relates to PSSF funding. PSSF funding is limited and, consequently is not solely responsible for changes in individual outcomes and program improvements. Changes in outcomes are generally part of a larger countywide effort. Without an expensive and formal evaluation, it often is hard to ascribe specific reasons for changes in outcomes, since anomalies may occur that could significantly impact data.

IV-B Program - Current Federal Initiatives

Introduction

Under the Title IV-B Subpart I and II programs, most of the funds are allocated to county and tribal agencies for services at the local level. Local agencies are given broad discretion with both Subpart I funds that are disbursed as part of the Community Aids allocations to counties, and within required service categories for the Subpart II funds, which are a separate PSSF program allocation. Local agencies assess their needs and may use their combined IV-B funds to meet local service priorities. The Brighter Futures Initiative (BFI) is an example of this type of funding combination.

The Brighter Futures Initiative is a comprehensive youth development and prevention initiative authorized under s. 46.99, *Wis Stats*, that focuses on preventing and reducing youth violence, AODA, child abuse and neglect, and teen pregnancy; as well as increasing adolescent self-sufficiency by encouraging high school graduation, vocational preparedness, improved social and other interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making in ten high-risk counties. BFI youth development and prevention projects target multiple aspects of a young person's life versus a single risk factor.

The Brighter Futures Initiative also encourages the coordination of prevention efforts at the local level. BFI projects consist of partnerships between agencies, such as: social services, school districts, law enforcement/juvenile court, health departments, faith based organizations, community centers, and local non-profit agencies, in order to maximize resources by using a cross-systems approach. BFI projects are "community collaborative projects" often utilizing other State, Federal, County, City, local funds and private donations, in addition to BFI funding. Brighter Futures is the strategy, or catalyst, that encourages pooling of funds and bringing additional partners to the project.

BFI communities determine the target group for projects based on local needs and available resources. Services range from educational outreach, youth development and primary prevention, to early intervention (secondary prevention). During 2005, more than 100,000 individuals were served as a result of the BFI community collaborative projects. An additional 6,570 individuals were served in CY 2005 by the Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Network in Milwaukee County, another community collaborative network that receives funding through DCFS. (**This total does not include 3,702 callers served through the Parent Helpline and 111,789 callers served through the Impact, Inc., '211' helpline.*)

The Milwaukee Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Network is in the process of aligning its programs with the Milwaukee Brighter Futures Initiative for CY 2006; it is anticipated that this alignment will result in better coordination of DCFS funded child/family prevention programs. The Brighter Futures Initiative provides funding for 34 community youth development and/or mentoring programs. Milwaukee BFI and the Milwaukee CAP Network, in particular, have strong partnerships with faith based organizations. Examples of these programs include: St. Gabriel's Peer to Peer Mentoring Program; St. Vincent de

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Paul's Family Resource Center; Milwaukee Christian Center and Holy Recovery Community (youth development programs).

The Administration for Children and Families has identified a number of national Executive Initiatives for which states may use IV-B funds. Since Wisconsin allocates funds to local agencies and allows local agencies to develop program plans based on their unique local needs and resources, DCFS does not have statewide programs funded with Title IV-B specifically to address these federal initiatives. However, many of the local plans include elements of these federal initiatives.

a. Healthy Marriage

Many local programs use the support portion of their PFFS grants to fund parenting programs at local family resources centers, home visitor programs, and other parenting initiatives. In addition, both preservation and reunification programs fund family counseling that focuses on strengthening relationships, including parental relationships.

b. Responsible Fatherhood

Many local agencies have adopted Fatherhood Programs or made existing programs more "father friendly." The State has used PSSF dollars to fund the development and piloting of a "father friendly" assessment tool. In addition, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare continues to work to strengthen efforts to identify fathers and connect children and fathers.

The DCFS is allocating PSSF monies to expand fatherhood activities: 1) to enhance efforts to identify, locate, and involve fathers and paternal relatives in an effort to better meet the needs of children in the CPS system; and, 2) to develop protocols that provide technical assistance and service assessments to counties/agencies that assist in removing barriers to create father friendly programs and services. Several counties included specific fatherhood programs in their 2005-2007 plans and, for the first time, one of our counties is using funding for genetic testing to identify fathers.

As part of Wisconsin's response to the federal CFSR, DCFS is also implementing an initiative to strengthen the relationships between non-custodial fathers and their children in the child welfare system. A series of focus groups has been held in several counties with fathers who have children in the child welfare system. The data obtained at those meetings will be formatted and presented statewide so that all counties will have information they can use develop programs and remove barriers with the goal of strengthening bonds and enhancing the relationships of children in the child welfare system and their non-custodial fathers.

In August of 2005, DHFS/DCFS sponsored a *Nurturing Fathers Facilitator Training* and provided conference scholarships for the Wisconsin State Prevention Conference in Wisconsin Rapids. Approximately eighteen individuals attended the *Nurturing Fathers Training* and received curriculum/materials to start a *Nurturing Fathers* program, including members from two Wisconsin Tribes, three correctional facilities, two Head Start agencies, a hospital, and a variety of community service agencies statewide.

The Milwaukee CAP Network's *George M. Sanders Father's Family Resource Center (FFRC)* has been serving fathers and their families since 1994. The *FFRC* places major emphasis on assisting fathers in removing barriers to success through counseling, referral services and case management. Counseling sessions focus on positive parenting, self-sufficiency, family preservation, employment readiness, and job retention. Eight week parenting and anger management classes are available. During 2005, 412 (unduplicated) men received services through the *FFRC* (including a total of 1,682 contacts); 80 fathers completed the 8-week *Parenting Classes* (this includes classes facilitated at *The Bridge* - pre-release corrections center for men).

During 2005, Racine County BFI programs have begun focusing on ways to get more family involvement in their programs with an emphasis on including fathers. The *Family Smart/Kid Friendly Program* is continuing to find ways to deal with the anger many of the female participants have toward the fathers of their children so that fathers can become actively involved in the lives of their children. *Family Smart/Kid Friendly* provides services in English and Spanish whenever possible; and continues to expand collaborations with community agencies, including: parenting classes at a new shelter for the homeless (HALO Inc.), and a *Parent Empowerment Conference* held at the 21st Century School (a Wisconsin charter school). *Family Smart/Kid Friendly* provides home visiting services as well as parenting classes, community events, and referral services based on family need.

c. Youth Development

Using a combination of PSSF/IV-E incentive funding, counties support a number of programs for youth. Some of these programs focus on kids who are in out-of-home care, or have recently returned from out-of-home, some of them are directed at high-risk youth and others serve the general youth population.

Local programs use these sources of funding to provide after-school programming, mentoring programs, grants to local schools and community groups for youth programs, and a variety of youth prevention/intervention initiatives. Again, based on county plans, the availability of funding for these activities seems particularly critical in rural, sparsely populated areas of the state.

d. Faith Based and Community Initiatives

The DCFS has always sought the participation of the faith community in child welfare program services. Several county planning committees include members of the faith community and some faith-based programs receive funding at the local level. In addition, the DCFS has a collaborative faith-based committee that assists us in a number of areas. For example, DCFS has worked with faith-based groups to promote Wisconsin's Week of the Family, and the DCFS/Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare contracts with two faith based agencies in Milwaukee County: Lutheran Social Services/First Choice for Children for foster care licensing and placement of children in out of home care, and Children's Service Society of Wisconsin for special needs adoption services.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Using PSSF funds for this purpose is often exercised in sparsely populated rural counties where there are limited service providers and limited facilities. However, some of the higher density, urban areas are also utilizing the faith community for mentoring and other youth services and to provide parenting and other family strengthening programs.

The *Best Friends, Best Men, School, Family and Neighborhood Project* is a coordinated effort between Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee BFI, families, and community/faith organizations. The program uses youth character development curricula with messages of abstinence from sex, drugs, alcohol and violence. Schools in the *Best Friends* and *Best Men* programs are paired with a faith based organization or community partner to provide education and support services for the entire family.

e. Rural Initiative

Wisconsin's PSSF program has been designed to allow communities to develop plans and implement programs that meet the unique needs of their individual communities. Consequently, rural programs are able to address special concerns such as transportation, isolation, limited service providers, etc. Funding is provided directly to the counties, allowing rural areas the ability to determine how to best serve their population and who will provide the services.

In Wisconsin, there are many sparsely populated rural counties that are two to four hours from any urban center. Funding allocations for PSSF and other programs recognize the challenges of providing services in rural areas, so small counties are given base allocations to ensure they can provide a minimum level of service.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan (CAPTA)

Introduction

The CAPTA program is operated by DCFS to provide training and technical assistance to counties operating child protective services (CPS) programs and to support efforts to prevent maltreatment of children and the recurrence of maltreatment.

Over the last year, additional Child Protective Services policies and standards have been developed and issued as a result of Wisconsin's Program Enhancement Plan (PEP). These policies and standards provide greater clarity and specificity to practice that supports decision-making throughout the life of a case. Additionally, all 72 counties have implemented the statewide-automated system (eWiSACWIS).

These two factors have moved the CPS system toward statewide consistency in practice and documentation. As policies and standards are developed modifications are concurrently made to the automated system to support practice changes.

The DCFS position funded by CAPTA, a CPS specialist, has been very involved in many aspects of bringing about this consistency in practice. These include policy and standard development, refinement of tools in eWiSACWIS, curriculum development and training, and technical assistance to counties.

Over the past few years, there have been several areas of focused program enhancements, which include:

- A. Safety Intervention Standards Development and Training
- B. Family Assessment and Case Planning Practice Changes
- C. Collaboration between CPS and Law Enforcement Agencies and CPS and DV programs
- D. Training for Guardians ad litem
- E. Improving the leadership skills of public child welfare managers and supervisors
- F. Training for CPS caseworkers and CPS supervisors
- G. CPS Initial Assessment and Case Findings Revisions
- H. Citizen Review Panels

CAPTA Progress Report

A. Safety Intervention Development and Training

Currently, the *Child Protective Services Investigation Standards* and the CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines include criteria for safety assessments and safety planning. As a part of the PEP process, the Child Welfare Case Process Committee developed the Safety Intervention Standards to provide even greater clarity and direction to case managers and supervisors related to safety management throughout the CPS case

process. These Standards and associated changes in eWiSACWIS will go into effect on July 17, 2006. The DCFS is also working with the Child Welfare Training Partnership to revise curricula to incorporate key practice principles and requirements of the Safety Intervention Standards.

The requirements of the Safety Intervention Standards span the life of a CPS case and range from assessing parent/caregiver protective capacities as they relate to impending danger threats to child safety to assessing the safety of placement homes as required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). Additionally, the Safety Intervention Standards include appendices with information to support and guide case practice, greater clarity related to the safety analysis, clearer guidance around identifying diminished or enhanced protective capacities for case planning, and greater emphasis on family involvement in the CPS process.

The DCFS will continue to seek technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Protective Services as it further develops or refines safety assessment protocols in the automated system for children placed in either licensed or unlicensed settings. The changes in eWiSACWIS will be finalized in 2007.

B. Family Assessment and Case Planning Practice Changes

Practice changes in CPS Ongoing Services will focus on using and integrating information from the Initial Assessment for case planning and service provision. Therefore, a comprehensive revision to the Ongoing Services Standards will be deferred until after the CPS Investigation Standards have been revised and HFS 44, the proposed administrative rule on permanency planning, has been promulgated in order to build on those policies.

Interim steps to the revisions, however, were initiated in 2005 and 2006. Two new policies were issued in 2005 as addenda to the CPS Ongoing Services Standards. The first "Family Interaction for Child Protective Services Cases When A Child Is Placed in Out-of-Home Care" provides standards of practice and guidance to caseworkers to assist in maintaining attachments between children and their parents/families. The second is "Caseworker-Parent/Family Face-to-Face Contact for Child Protective Services Cases" which outlines requirements and provides additional information for caseworkers in providing face-to-face contact with children and families.

Additionally the PEP Child Welfare Case Process Committee, as well as child welfare staff statewide, identified the need to streamline the Ongoing Services assessment and planning process to better assist caseworkers in their work with families. This input necessitated changes in the automated system. As a result, a more focused assessment and planning process was developed through input by the committee and eWiSACWIS design sessions. These changes mirror the Safety Intervention Standards and focus on supporting families in making necessary changes to keep their children safe. Changes to the automated system will be a part of the July eWiSACWIS release. The DCFS is also working with the Child Welfare Training Partnership to modify the core training course

for family assessment and case planning to reflect the practice and principles of the Safety Intervention Standards

C. Collaboration Between CPS and Law Enforcement Agencies and CPS and Domestic Violence (DV) Programs

In 2005, the DCFS continued to provide technical assistance to county agencies in developing Memoranda of Understanding with law enforcement agencies by utilizing the *Standard for Collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies*. This work will continue as CPS and Law Enforcement agencies implement 2005 Wisconsin Act 232.

Over the past year, DCFS has also continued to collaborate with DV agencies to enhance the CPS response in families where domestic violence is present. In addition, the DCFS Domestic Abuse Specialist as well as an advocate from the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence are active members of the Child Welfare Case Process Committee.

In 2006, the DCFS will convene an ad hoc group of CPS supervisors and workers, state and local domestic violence advocates, and Training Partnership representatives to develop a domestic violence handbook for the child protective services system. The goal of the ad hoc group is to create a clear, succinct, user-friendly handbook for CPS line staff and supervisors that provides useful information for cases in which domestic violence coexists with child maltreatment. The Domestic Violence Handbook will build on existing policies or practices to complement training for CPS workers and supervisors.

Information in the handbook will include:

- Operating definition of domestic violence and basic facts,
- Policy references, which list those places in CPS policy where domestic violence is specifically cited,
- Practice applications, which include guidelines and suggestions for CPS staff to assist them in recognizing domestic violence and applying "best practices" in those cases, and
- Resource information, including an overview of domestic abuse restraining orders/injunctions; information on criminal sanctions; resources and support services available; and an overview of batterers intervention programming.

In addition to the handbook, staff from the DCFS continue to provide consultation and technical assistance on various issues in working with counterpart systems. Domestic violence advocates are also members of the PEP Implementation Team and the Child Welfare Case Process Committee and provide input and feedback on child protective services policies and procedures.

D. Training for Guardians ad Litem

The DCFS is a co-sponsor of the annual GAL Conference. Aimed at professionals whose work impacts the well being of children, the conference promotes a multi-disciplinary approach to child advocacy. The conference focuses on cross system collaboration that assists professionals in decision-making to assure children's needs are met in the context of the Adoption and Safe Families Act. Topics pertinent to child safety have always been covered at this conference. Focus has been given to ensure that information provided is applicable to social workers, GALs, and other community partners. .

Social workers, guardians ad litem, judges, court commissioners, prosecutors, public defenders, therapists, and other professionals are provided the opportunity to learn information from a variety of experts in the fields of family dynamics, law, child development, child psychology, medicine, and child welfare. In 2005, examples of conference sessions included information on children of prisoners, child sexual behaviors, reactive attachment disorder, internet sexual predators, and child welfare case law.

The Guardian ad Litem conference has been a significant source of training and continues to be well attended, with attendance increasing each year.

E. Improving the Leadership Skills of Public Child Welfare Managers and Supervisors

The DCFS continues to recognize that public child welfare administrators, managers, and supervisors need information and technical assistance to carry out their critical leadership roles by sponsoring the annual Public Child Welfare Conference.

This provides an opportunity to update child welfare program managers in Wisconsin on national developments in child welfare practice, as well as to discuss and plan new initiatives in the state. The two and a half day conference also includes a statewide director's and supervisor's meeting specifically designed to support each group in addressing day-to-day practice and program issues.

The annual Public Child Welfare Conference was held in May 2006 with content that continues to support the knowledge, skills, and values critical to successful leadership within child welfare agencies. Although first designed to include child welfare staff from county, public human/social service agencies, it now includes other community partners who serve families in the public child welfare system.

F. Training for CPS Caseworkers and Supervisors

Training Curriculum Updates

The four Child Welfare Training Partnerships and the Indian Child Welfare Training Partnership provide most of the training received by CPS caseworkers and supervisors.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

These activities are funded in part with the CAPTA grant and training curricula is determined through the Training Council and its Curriculum Committee, with staff participation from the DCFS.

Wisconsin initially imported training curriculum from the Institute of Human Services (IHS). Over the last several years, Wisconsin has gone through a process of significantly revising the IHS foundation curricula. Revisions have been made to reflect new knowledge and research in the field, to include safety assessment and planning, to reflect current practice as well as to incorporate laws, policies, tools and formats specific to Wisconsin.

Access Training

In 2005 new curriculum was developed to support the implementation of the “Child Protective Services Access Standard for the Receipt and Analysis of Report Information.” This training is offered on a regular basis by the Child Welfare Training Partnership and the curriculum will become a part of foundation training for all new staff.

Parental Notification/Legal Rights Training

DCFS also collaborated with the Child Welfare Training Partnership to provide training to CPS staff regarding their legal duties to protect the legal rights of and safety of children and families throughout the CPS case process. Training will continue throughout 2006 and this information will be incorporated into the current legal core training for new workers.

Drug Endangered Children Training

Wisconsin, like other states nationally, has seen a rise in the use of methamphetamine. In the effort to provide information to CPS staff as they work with families who abuse methamphetamine, the DCFS collaborated with the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children and Wisconsin’s Department of Justice to provide training throughout the state.

Two conferences were held to help communities establish multidisciplinary response teams including law enforcement, medical professionals, prosecutors, child protective services, mental health professionals and educators. The trainings were two days in length and covered the research and response to drug endangered children. Four additional one day trainings were held throughout the various regions of the state targeted at child protective services response to drug endangered children but all disciplines were again invited to participate.

A steering committee for the Wisconsin Alliance for Drug Endangered Children has been established. They are currently receiving consultation on defining their mission and goals for building and sustaining the Wisconsin Alliance for Drug Endangered Children. The steering committee is planning for five regional conferences to be held in 2006 and 2007.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

In addition to the regional conferences, a statewide conference is planned for October of 2006. This two-day conference will be held in Stevens Point, Wisconsin and will again include all disciplines working with drug endangered children. It is hoped that ideas and practices from throughout the state can be shared through networking at the statewide conference.

The steering committee will also have a best practice handbook and a website developed during 2006. Subcommittees are currently completing their development and the finished products should be completed by the annual conference in October of 2006.

Wisconsin also made a statutory change effective March 3, 2006, which expanded the definition of “abuse” in the Children’s Code to include manufacturing methamphetamine in the presence of a child, in a child’s home or on the premises of a child’s home, or under any circumstances in which a reasonable person should have known that the manufacture would be seen, smelled, or heard by a child. The scope of the child abuse reporting law was also expanded to require that such abuse be reported and investigated.

Safety Assessment and Planning Training

Revisions to the current foundation course, “Managing Sufficient Safety”, were initiated in 2005 to integrate information from the “Safety Intervention Standards.” DCFS staff have been actively involved in these revisions to assure that the curriculum spans the life of a CPS case and emphasizes family involvement throughout the case process. The revised curriculum will be finalized in 2006.

Annual Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

The 18th annual Wisconsin Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect took place in April of 2005. This conference has a long tradition of being multi-disciplinary in its focus. The conference encouraged persons in the fields of CPS, law enforcement, public health and medicine, domestic violence, law, education, prevention, and advocacy to come together to discuss joint issues and solutions. DCFS is a co-sponsor and participates each year on the planning committee.

G. CPS Initial Assessment and Case Findings Revisions

Concerns about the purpose of substantiating child abuse and neglect began in 1999. This came about in part because the substantiation decision began to be used to deny persons access to certain employment and licensure, although it was not originally intended to be used for that purpose. This was compounded by concerns about the accuracy of substantiation decision making, which varies from county to county.

As a part of the Program Enhancement Plan process, this area changed focus to revising the cases finding memo rather than solely examining the purpose of substantiating child abuse or neglect. In 2005, the Child Welfare Case Process Committee began revisions to the current DCFS policy on the case finding (e.g., substantiated, unsubstantiated)

decision-making process. This work began by examining issues related to this process in order to provide additional guidance in making a substantiation decision and to clarify definitions of what constitutes child abuse and neglect in Wisconsin statutes. Additionally, the committee revised the interview protocol and requirements for secondary and non-caregiver cases especially related to the rights and role of parents. Without also revising the entire CPS Investigation Standards, the policy was confusing and unclear.

As a result, Wisconsin included the revisions to the case finding memo as a PEP renegotiation item (PEP A.2). The revisions to this policy will now be included into an integrated revision of the entire CPS Investigation Standards (Primary, Secondary, Non-Caregiver). As a part of these revisions, the Child Welfare Case Process Committee will:

- A. Explore the use of an alternative or differential response approach to CPS cases,
- B. Incorporate 2005 Wisconsin Act 232, which makes the decision by CPS to investigate reports of non-caregiver abuse discretionary, into the Standards, and
- C. Highlight the assessment of parent/caregiver protective capacities as they relate to impending danger threats to child safety.

The DCFS will use technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Protective Services to complete these revisions in 2007.

H. Citizen Review Panels

In response to the federal CAPTA requirements for states to establish Citizen Review Panels (CRPs), Wisconsin established two county panels and one panel with individuals representing each of the counties in a judicial district. The third panel proved difficult to manage due to its size and was reformed as a county panel. The current CRPs are in La Crosse County, Marathon County, and Outagamie County. The CY 2005 Citizen Review Panel Annual Reports are attached to this plan.

Training and education were provided to the CRP members, both in terms of the role of Citizen Review Panels and child welfare legislation, policy, and practice. In mid-2005, staff from DCFS held a video conference with the citizen review panels to discuss the new requirements under CAPTA, get input on the state CAPTA plan, and provide an opportunity for sharing of information and ideas among the panels and between the panels and the state office.

In the fall of 2005, DCFS spoke with each CRP regarding what support and involvement they would like from DCFS and how to assure meaningful and timely communication of their recommendations. A number of CRP members attended the statewide public child welfare conference held in May of 2006 and met informally with the division administrator. A member of the Outagamie County CRP and a DCFS staff person attended the national CRP conference in May of 2006. The Outagamie County panel member is interested in gaining ideas to further develop the work of that panel and will also assist in developing a draft statewide work plan to improve support for and

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

communication with and amongst the CRPs. The draft plan will be shared with the CRPs for their input before being finalized.

The CRP's are multi-functional and, in addition to their role on a Citizen Review Panel, they provide essential input to the local county child welfare agency. Among the areas they also address are: helping to improve coordination and collaboration among various public and private entities that provide programs and services to the children and families of their county and identifying community needs and working to educate the community. DCFS staff meet with the panels to ensure appropriate implementation of the new CAPTA requirements and also to complete plans for their participation in Wisconsin's PEP implementation.

The Citizen Review Panels have worked on issues of local importance (e.g. studying workload concerns in LaCrosse County) and issues of statewide importance (e.g. the participation of members from the Marathon County CRP in a DHFS-sponsored work group to streamline the eWISACWIS).

The Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) resulting from the federal Child and Family Review (CFSR) process is the blueprint for activities to improve the child protective services system at the state and local levels. DCFS established a PEP Implementation team as well as four committees to implement the activities outlined in the PEP. CRP members serve on those PEP committees and make recommendations for improving the statewide and local child protective services system through that process. The CRPs receive a written update every three months through the PEP progress reports that are sent to the full PEP Implementation Team and posted to the web for general public access.

A member of the Marathon County CRP was actively involved throughout 2005 in one of the PEP subcommittees organized in response to the CFSR. That subcommittee developed the Access Standard, creating statewide policy for screening reports of alleged child maltreatment and determining response times consistent with children's safety needs. The subcommittee also worked on revising policies for handling those cases that are screened in for assessment.

The CRP's submit annual activity reports to DCGS, but these reports do not contain specific program recommendations. Program recommendations are made through the PEP committee process. Therefore, the CAPTA requirement for submitting "a written response to state and local child protection systems and the citizen review panel(s)" has been addressed through the PEP process.

Special Needs Adoption Program

Program Description

The Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) provides permanency consultation to child welfare agencies, recruits adoptive families, and finalizes adoption for children who need a permanent home. Children in out-of-home care who are made available for adoption by counties through a termination of parental rights (TPR) are referred to the SNAP.

Children are matched with adoptive parents or, in better than 85% of cases, are adopted by their current foster parents. DCFS oversees the program statewide, with the Milwaukee adoption program managed by BMCW and the balance-of-state program managed by BPP.

Under Wisconsin law, DCFS assumes guardianship for children upon termination of parental rights (TPR). Following TPR making the child available for adoption, custody and responsibility for the foster care payment is transferred from the county child welfare agency to the SNAP. In Milwaukee County, cases are transferred to the adoption program within BMCW. The SNAP and Milwaukee Adoption program finalize the adoptions and process requests for Adoption Assistance.

Progress Report

The SNAP uses innovative approaches to providing professional quality services that have resulted in permanency for thousands of children in Wisconsin. In addition, surveys reflect that adoptive families have a high level of satisfaction with the services provided through the program. Planning and consultation by state permanency consultants with counties has assisted in moving more children to reunification or permanence through adoption. At the same time, applicants for an adoptive placement are discovering that the time to complete an adoptive home study has decreased from previous years. All of these approaches will continue to have an impact improving permanency for children.

The goal of permanency is a common thread that unites agencies to achieve the established standards of practice of the Adoption Program. The SNAP has evolved into a program that ensures quality services to families and timely permanence to children by adhering to performance standards that focus on best practice and comply with state and federal guidelines.

The DCFS has been able to maintain a pool of available foster and adoptive resources, with recruitment emphasizing word-of-mouth information sharing by adoptive parents and photo listing children needing a permanent placement on the state funded web site through Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, as well as on the AdoptUsKids web site. A large number of children achieve permanency through adoption because 85% of our finalized adoptions are a result of foster home conversions. Accordingly, DCFS works with counties to recruit more quality foster homes that can become adoptive homes.

The Adoption Program develops an annual report to the Legislature regarding the previous year's services and costs. A copy of the 2005 report is attached. The private agencies have demonstrated their ability to develop the capacity to handle all the assigned cases and continue to move the children to permanence in a timely and efficient manner.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Number of Adoptions

Increasing the numbers of minority and special needs adoptions and increasing the timeliness of adoption finalizations has been a priority for the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP). Over the past 5 years, Wisconsin has doubled the number of finalized special needs adoptions. Calendar Year 2005 was the first time in four consecutive years that adoptions in Wisconsin did not exceed 1,000 children. Of the 902 adoptions in 2005, 437 of the children were over the age of nine.

The following chart reflects the numbers of adoptions for special needs children in which DCFS had guardianship over the last ten years. During that period, 8111 children were adopted into permanent families.

Year	Total
1996	565
1997	611
1998	722
1999	654
2000	709
2001	727
2002	1044
2003	1153
2004	1024
2005	902
Total	8111

Adoption Assistance

DCFS and private partner adoption staff strive to find appropriate adoptive families to best meet the needs of children when it is not safe for them to stay with their birth parents. A majority of the children adopted through the SNAP are eligible for adoption assistance. Adoption assistance reimburses the family for some of the costs of extensive and frequently expensive care. As of January 2006, there were 8,134 children receiving Adoption Assistance through the State of Wisconsin. The Adoption Assistance Program is funded with Title IV-E and state matching funds.

Adoption assistance may include:

- Medical assistance for some medical costs not covered by the family's health insurance;
- Monthly reimbursement to adoptive parent(s) to assist in meeting the financial demands of caring for a child with special needs; and
- Reimbursement of certain non-recurring adoption expenses (e.g., legal fees and/or agency fees) up to \$2,000 per child.

Chapter HFS 50, Adm. Code, *Facilitating the Adoption of a Child with Special Needs*, became effective in 2002. According to its requirements, a child must have, or be at high risk of developing, special care needs in order to be eligible for adoption assistance, and otherwise would not be able to be placed for adoption without assistance. Examples of a child with special care needs include:

- an older child – 10 to 18 years of age;
- a child experiencing emotional or behavioral problems to a degree that meets established criteria;
- a sibling group of three or more that must be placed together;
- a child of a minority race who cannot be readily placed due to a lack of placement resources (in accordance with the Multiethnic Placement Act, MEPA);
- a child with a disability or in need of personal care assistance (e.g., dressing, bathing, or feeding) or with special medical or physical problems that require special diets, medication, or physical therapy; and
- a child at risk of developing special care needs due to poor prenatal care, or a child whose birth family medical history indicates a risk for future health problems, or a child whose social history identifies certain risk factors.

Redesign of State Adoption Program

The completion of some transitions in the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) occurred in January 2005. First, the remaining State SNAP workers completed the transition from State Adoption Worker to State Permanency Consultant (SPC). The DHFS now has 13 SPC staff providing full time permanency consultation to the 71 counties outside Milwaukee. In this role the SPC is in a much better position to impact the quality and timely permanence for children in out-of-home (OHC) care. Through this function the SPC can help identify the treatment and care needs early in the OHC experience of the child and facilitate the movement of the child, when ready, to an appropriate alternative resource when necessary. This will help reduce the number of OHC moves the child experiences and assure the child is ready for permanence when the decision is made to terminate parental rights.

Second, all adoption related services were moved to our private partner contracts. Over the past 5 years our private partner agencies have gained the competence to handle all types of SNAP adoption no matter the level of complexity. Our QA reviews of adoptive families 1 year post adoption indicates a very high level of satisfaction with the services offered.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

In January 2005 contracts were issued to the 3 successful bidders for the regional adoption contracts. The decision was made by DCFS to reduce the number of contracts from 5 to 3 to replicate the current regional structure in the SNAP. The agencies are Children's Service Society of Wisconsin and Lutheran Social Services. The lead and subcontract agencies remain essentially unchanged, which allows for continuity in adoption services along with continued growth in the quality of services as the private partner workers become better trained in SNAP policies and procedures.

The State Permanency Consultants (SPC) build close relationships with staff in the counties where they are assigned. The focus of their work is on consultation with Child Protective Services supervisors and social workers, foster families, birth family members and children who will be affected by a termination of parental rights. In 2005 the SPC's consulted on more than 800 children who have a primary or a concurrent plan of adoption. The BMCW uses contract employees to provide a similar permanency consultant function in Milwaukee County.

One of the outcomes of the state staff's new permanency consultation role has been the earlier identification and placement of children in pre-adoptive homes when adoption is the primary goal or the concurrent plan.

A benefit of the close working relationship between counties and SPC's is the sharing of prospective adoptive resource families for placement of children, as well as adoptive home studies of existing foster families. This approach will assist Wisconsin to meet the improvement targets in the PEP toward the national performance standard federal that 32% of children achieve a finalized adoption within 24 months of the date of removal.

AFA to SAFE

Following the recommendation of the PEP implementation team to combine the Foster Family Assessment (FFA) with the Adoptive Family Assessment (AFA) the Adoption Services Committee explored a number of combinations (PEP D.5). In February 2006 the Adoption Services Committee recommended to the PEP implementation team and DHFS that the DHFS change to the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation developed by the Consortium for Children out of California and the new combined home study tool.

The Consortium for Children has offered Wisconsin the opportunity to change to this new study process as part of the Consortium's federal grant. By doing this there would be minimal cost to the DHFS. The DHFS is currently on a timeline to incorporate the SAFE study process into eWiSACWIS by October 2006 and have staff trained by October 2006 to use the new study process.

Adoption QA

The Quality Assurance Program within the Adoption and Consultation Unit, set up four years ago, has developed a strong leadership and consultation role, with staff, within the regions of the state to provide practice and policy advice and training to contract agencies, State Permanency Consultants, regional supervisors and central program management. The QA Specialists monitor the quality of the adoption services for contract agencies through case reviews, satisfaction surveys, and complaint analysis and resolution. In

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

addition, the program specialists undertake individual projects for program improvement, such as eWiSACWIS monitoring, recruitment and retention of adoptive families, and international adoption monitoring. The specialists provide statistical analysis as needed and create program improvement initiatives. The QA role within the agency has become a crucial component of the provision of adoption services of high quality throughout the regions served by the Adoption Program.

The most visible initiative of the QA Program has been the monthly e-mail newsletter addressed to all state and partnership staff. The function of the newsletter is to provide a means of communication to staff who are geographically dispersed throughout the state. The newsletter provides a method of dispensing policy and practice information, as well as initiating program improvement, such as ensuring eWiSACWIS completion for AFCARS compliance. The newsletter has become a very important tool of the QA Program to ensure consistency and communication on a statewide level.

QA specialists have taken a very strong training role for various areas of practice in the regions. In addition, the specialists monitor satisfaction for the program as a whole and create reports on the functioning of the Adoption program.

Adoption Incentive Payments

The DCFS has initiated and continues to implement efforts to support the delivery of timely, high-quality special needs adoption services. Adoption incentive funds received by the DCFS have been directed toward the continued support of the Special Needs Adoption Initiative and other child welfare program services. Such resources are used to enhance the program's capacity to complete adoptive home studies, finalize adoptive placements, and achieve adoptions in a timely manner. Adoption incentive funds enhance the State's capacity to recruit and study potential adoptive families and finalize adoptive placements by public and private staff within the Adoption Program.

Adoption incentive funds received by the DCFS were used to support Adoption Program services in the following areas:

- Increased adoptive home studies for families by contract partner agencies;
- Support six Post-Adoption Resource Centers to provide post-adoption services;
- Support recruitment efforts to find adoptive resources for children;
- Special Child Welfare initiatives to support the activities outlined in the PEP; and,
- Fund project staff to perform additional special needs adoption services.

DCFS has earned adoption incentive funds for six years, with FFY 2004 being the most recent year that funds were earned. The adoption incentive funds were used to support the state Adoption Program private partner contracts for the first three years. State funds and federal PSSF funds are currently used to maintain the contracts.

Medicaid - Per the requirement in Section 473A of the Social Security Act for adoption incentive funds, Wisconsin provides health insurance coverage through the Title XIX Medical Assistance Program to all children with special needs for whom there is an Adoption Assistance Agreement in place. The Medical Assistance Program offers broad

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

access to a comprehensive range of medical services. Medical Assistance categorically needy coverage is authorized for every child who is qualified for Adoption Assistance whether they are Title IV-E eligible or not. Children who receive no Adoption Assistance funds but who are considered “at risk” are also certified for Medical Assistance coverage.

Post Adoption Resource Centers

DCFS contracts with service providers to operate Post Adoption Recourse Center (PARC) services in Green Bay, Stevens Point, Milwaukee, Madison, Eau Claire and La Crosse. PARC services are available to all adoptive families, including parents of children who are adopted privately through the domestic and international adoption programs.

The focus of the six PARCs is to:

- Provide education, support activities and services to adoptive families living in the identified service area;
- Improve community awareness of adoption, promoting a positive image of adoption and an increased understanding of the unique issues facing adoptive families, especially among public and private human service providers, schools and medical care providers to enable these professionals to better serve families;
- Increase the availability of services for adoptive families by providing referral services such as respite care, crisis intervention, day care, after-school care, legal help, family counseling, support groups related to adoption, Title XIX service providers, and planning for the transition of an adopted child to adulthood; and,
- Establish collaborative efforts among public and private organizations and the general public to address the needs of adoptive families in the PARC area.

The names of all families who enter into an adoption assistance agreement are shared with the respective PARC, unless the family opts not to have their address shared. In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, the School of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Children’s Services Society of Wisconsin have continued in a joint effort to research and evaluate the effectiveness of the PARCs in providing services to the families and children involved in special needs adoptions.

International Adoptions

DCFS has a limited role in international adoptions. Adoption agencies can place adoptive children with parents in Wisconsin without the agencies being licensed by the State of Wisconsin. Most international adoptions occur with no involvement by the SNAP program operated by DCFS. Adoption assistance is not available for international adoptions under Wisconsin law since international children do not qualify for federal IV-E reimbursement. Parents adopting international children can receive services through the PARCs. Parents of international children can also access social services through county agencies.

As a result of the Hague Convention, states are required to track dissolutions of adoptions of international children. Dissolutions of adoptions occur after the adoption has been finalized as compared with disruptions of pre-adoptive placements prior to finalization. For purposes of tracking dissolutions, DCFS looks for information on dissolutions of

international adoptions where the child enters out-of-home care or parental rights of the adoptive parents are terminated.

In 2005, DCFS recorded 14 internationally adopted children who entered out-of-home care. There were a variety of reasons for the children entering OHC, but generally it was a voluntary decision by the parents due to inability to control the child. County staff said that there was a general lack of parenting skills, preparation, and training for the adoptive parents. The original adoptive families are caring for the child with the help of services provided through the county child welfare agency in 12 of the cases. In the other two cases reunification was also initially the plan, but this changed following an investigation of substantiated abuse allegations and resulted in the termination of parental rights (TPR).

DCFS does not have a way to identify dissolutions of international adoptions that do not come to the attention of county child welfare agencies. DCFS receives anecdotal information about families that arrange independent adoptions for these children, but unless the family comes forward to ask for services or financial support, DCFS has no way of knowing the number of such cases.

DCFS currently does not have the specific details on the 14 cases in 2005 in terms of the country of origin for the children or the agencies that arranged the adoptions. Future reports will provide this level of detail. Late in 2005 the adoption QA staff developed a data collection form and started collecting more detailed information on displaced and dissolved international adoptions. The form is being completed by the SPC during regular contact with county staff as an integral part of permanency consultation. The information will be used to identify agency training needs, licensing issues, and updated training to families that intend to adopt internationally for internationally adopted children entering out-of-home care in 2006 and later.

MEPA and Recruitment

To ensure compliance with federal requirements, the SNAP use a form in the placement process statewide to evaluate placements for Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) purposes. The QA staff developed this tool to help ensure that a variety of resources, particularly relatives, are considered in making placement decisions and that the most appropriate resource for the child is chosen based on identified criteria. The SNAP will track information on MEPA and ICWA, as well as on international adoptions as required in the international adoption act (IAA). There were no MEPA violations in Wisconsin during 2005.

More emphasis is being placed on recruitment of families to meet the needs of the children in care. Special emphasis is placed on targeted recruitment. The DCFS is currently working with AdoptUsKids, as a pilot state to address recruitment needs. The DCFS will be doing benchmarking initially in the area of Indian family recruitment and may move into other targeted ethnic areas of need. AdoptUsKids was in Wisconsin six days already in 2004 and the DCFS plans to have them back for several more days during the year. While recruitment was not identified as an area needing improvement in the CFSR, the DCFS believes it is an area where Wisconsin can do better.

Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

The Wisconsin Independent Living (IL) Program provides statewide services and support for youth in and exiting out-of-home care in accordance with the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. This report addresses Sec. 477 (42 U.S.C. 677) (a) of the Social Security Act and progress on the CFSP goals as required for the annual report.

Agencies must submit an annual work plan describing the current and following years' IL programs and services. Annual reports requiring information on the number of youth served, services, progress achieved and challenges addressed are also submitted to the DCFS. This report attempts to summarize all local efforts, providing a generalized accounting of services design and outcomes. State activities are also noted and described where appropriate. Wisconsin does not create trust funds under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

In 2005, Wisconsin continued using data collection form, CFS-873A, Independent Living Participant Data, in anticipation of the finalized Federal reporting requirements for State Independent Living Programs. Data provided throughout this final report was compiled using the CFS-873A and covers the period, January 1 - December 31, 2005. Wisconsin does not have an electronic database system for capturing and reporting independent living (IL) data. Accuracy of the data in this report is dependent upon each agency's interpretation of the IL eligibility and program criteria and the manual recording and calculation of demographic and services data. It is anticipated that the quality of IL data and reporting will improve when federal reporting requirements are finalized and these requirements are implemented via the Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (eWISACWIS).

Chafee IL Program Eligibility

The Wisconsin IL Program provides services and supports to youth aged 15-21 years. Eligibility for Wisconsin Chafee services includes those youth that have been in out-of-home care (OHC) placement in Wisconsin for at least 6 months after the age of 15 or older with eligibility continuing to the age of 21 years. Youth that are in OHC placement for six months and adopted after the age of 15 years are also eligible for services. Youth exiting care prior to age 18 due to adoption, guardianship (s. 48.977, Stats.), long-term Kinship Care or hospitalization, may continue to be eligible for IL services, although eligibility for certain benefits (e.g., room and board, Medicaid) may be limited by the Chafee Act.

Distribution of Funds

Chafee funds are allocated via state/county and state/tribal contracts. Recipients of CFCIP and ETV-funded allocations were expanded in 2005 to include 71 counties, 3 tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), and the Division of Juvenile Corrections. The Chafee funding will continue to be used to develop, expand, and strengthen local independent living services for youth. The State allocates funding to these local agencies based on the average number of youth eligible for and receiving independent living

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

services in each community. This formula was developed and utilized to ensure that each agency receives an amount of the available funding that is commensurate with the number of local youth eligible for and receiving assistance to achieve independence.

Wisconsin has received reductions in federal funding for both the Independent Living and Education and Training Vouchers Programs. In FFY 2005 CFCIP funding was reduced by 23% and the ETV Program funding was reduced by 18% versus the prior year. These cuts occurred despite the fact that the number of older youth eligible for and receiving IL services has increased during the funding periods. While Wisconsin will strive to ensure that youth receive efficient and effective IL services and supports, significant program changes are being made to reflect the decreased federal resources and an increased service population.

National Evaluations

The State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Division of Children and Family Services, continues to cooperate in national evaluations of the effects of the programs in achieving the purposes of the CFCIP. In addition, Wisconsin, along with Iowa and Illinois, is participating in an ongoing multi-state evaluation of older youth exiting foster care. Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago, is conducting this research project and Wave 2 of a three-wave study was completed in 2005, with the final Wave 3 report due by December 2006. Evaluation results will be used to shape future independent living services for youth in and exiting care. Results may also be used for future federal reporting.

Education and Training Vouchers Program

In 2003, upon receiving federal approval of Wisconsin's Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program plan, the state distributed additional funding and information regarding program requirements to all county and tribal departments of human or social services for implementation by January 1, 2004. A numbered memo, DCFS Memo Series 2003-10, mandating the implementation of the ETV Program and outlining program requirements, was disseminated statewide to all counties and tribes providing independent living services under Wisconsin's Independent Living Program. The memo describes the ETV Program requirements and desired outcomes that must be met while allowing individual agencies the flexibility to implement the services locally in the most effective manner possible for all youth. State-facilitated meetings were held in each region of the State to further explain and discuss program implementation, requirements, and practice issues regarding the ETV program.

In 2005, ETV program funds were used to expand the educational component of independent living services at the state and local levels. The existing DCFS Scholarship Program for youth aging out of out-of-home care increased the amount of the individual scholarships available to youth for post-secondary education and training and extended the period for which youth will be eligible for the scholarship funds. Additional funding was provided to local agencies to expand services and increase financial support to assist youth with participation in post-secondary institutions. The state and local agencies collaborated as follows:

- The DCFS Scholarship Program will provide funding for any direct costs; i.e., tuition and fees associated with attending an institution of higher learning.
- Combined scholarships and local ETV assistance will not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act.
- Local agencies will use ETV funds for the purchase of technical equipment or assistance to include, but not be limited to, computers, calculators, and supplies associated with post-secondary coursework.
- The DCFS Scholarship Program and local agencies may provide additional assistance or support necessary for successful completion of higher education, including, but not limited to: tutoring, transportation, books, child care, housing, program entry testing, costs, incentives, leadership/workshop/vocational activities, etc.

ETV program eligibility requirements are:

- Education and training vouchers (ETV) will be available to all youth meeting current State independent living eligibility criteria (i.e., youth aged 15 to 21 years placed in out-of-home care at the age of 15 or older for a period of not less than six months) for costs associated with post-secondary attendance and participation.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- Eligibility will also be extended to youth up to 23 years of age who were participating in the voucher program on the date they attained age 21, as long as they are enrolled in a full-time post-secondary program and are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of that program.
- Youth adopted from foster care after attaining 6 months in out-of-home care followed by adoption at the age of 15 years or older shall be considered eligible for ETV program assistance.

ETV Program Criteria:

- Vouchers shall be available for the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education, as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.
- Voucher amounts shall not exceed the lesser of \$5000 per year or the total cost of attendance, as defined in section 472 of that Act.
- The amount of a voucher under this section shall be disregarded for purposes of determining the recipient's eligibility for, or the amount of, any other Federal or federally-supported assistance, except that the total amount of all assistance should not exceed the total cost of attendance. The DCFS Scholarship Program shall take appropriate steps to prevent duplication of benefits under this and other Federal or federally supported programs.
- The program is coordinated with other appropriate education and training programs. State and local agencies will partner with secondary and post-secondary institutions and each other to increase awareness of the educational challenges faced by youth aging out of out-of-home care and the ETV Program. Wisconsin initiated this collaboration in 2001 under the CFCIP, resulting in the development of the statewide Higher Education Opportunities for Youth Advisory Group. Modifications to the existing DCFS Scholarship Program were made according to input received by all of these partners to better meet the needs of youth while fulfilling the new requirements of the ETV program.

ETV Program Development:

- Assessments of youth skills, needs, and interest areas will continue as implemented under the CFCIP. Youth, child welfare agencies, foster parents, and biological family members will participate in development of case plans to support youth's educational goals. Case plans shall include, but are not limited to, assisting youth to: identify post-secondary education or training as a viable option, identify potential vocations and careers, identify and address other areas of need (e.g., housing, transportation) that impact successful participation in higher education, and develop Independent Living Transition Plans to enhance the success of the youth transitioning to self sufficiency.
- Outreach efforts to continue supporting youth after leaving out-of-home care will continue as implemented under the CFCIP. Additional efforts will be implemented to encourage, inform, and remind, these youth of the higher

education assistance available to them prior to reaching age 21 and potentially up to age 23.

- The DCFS Scholarship Program will be expanded to include scholarship funds up to \$5000 per youth per year and allow youths to receive assistance through the fund on an ongoing basis as long as other scholarship eligibility criteria (e.g., satisfactory progress) are met. Youth must complete an application for the scholarship program and provide proof of acceptance to the post-secondary institution.
- Data will be maintained by the local agencies and the DCFS Scholarship Program, including: the number of youth completing a high school education, the number of youth attending post-secondary institutions, the number and types of degrees or certification achieved by participating youth, and the amount and type of financial assistance provided utilizing ETV funds.

Independent living roundtables regarding the ETV Program were held prior to program implementation in 2003 and continued throughout 2005. These meetings were scheduled in various regions around the State to encourage increased local participation. Meetings continue to focus on providing technical assistance to Independent Living Coordinators, informing the DCFS about program successes and challenges, and facilitate sharing and discussion between caseworkers and agencies regarding practice issues in the area of helping youth access and achieve higher education.

The following table provides an overview of Wisconsin's 2005 ETV Program:

Table A. 2005 Education and Training Vouchers Program

Total: Local agency ETV Program funds expended	\$ 219,110
Total: DCFS Scholarship Program awards	\$ 491,277
# Youth receiving ETV support or assistance	204
# youth attending post-secondary institutions	228
# youth completing a degree, license, or certification	29
# youth denied ETV assistance	19
# youth receiving DCFS Scholarship award	165

The most common use of ETV Program funding was the payment of tuition and fees, followed by the purchase of consumables (e.g., books, supplies, lab fees, uniforms, etc.). Agencies also used the funds to purchase transportation, room and board assistance, and equipment such as computers and calculators. Less commonly reported assistance included childcare and tutors, with occasional other purchases such as medical assistance, personal items, food, gas, utilities, health and car insurance, mentors, and required exams (e.g., tuberculosis, state occupational competency).

2005 Progress Report toward the purposes of 1-6 of Section 477(a)

The following sections provide detailed data and descriptions of CFCIP plan goal progress, specific program accomplishments, barriers encountered, and the progress made toward the purposes of 1-6 of Section 477(a). These descriptions also assure that CFCIP plan certifications were upheld.

Help youth transition to self-sufficiency

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that all of these agencies are providing an array of services designed to help youth achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

Wisconsin's Federal CFCIP funds are allocated to 71 counties, 3 tribes, the Division of Juvenile Corrections, and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare to provide services and support to youth in and exiting foster care up to age 21 years. Each agency submits an annual work plan describing how the program will operate and an annual budget detailing the areas in which the funds will be used. CFCIP funds may be used for staff salaries, training, program administrative costs, direct services, support, supplies and/or financial assistance for youth.

Support for agencies and staff providing IL services is ongoing and needed. Technical assistance from the State is provided on a weekly basis. Most common requests for assistance include program eligibility, appropriate CFCIP expenditures, the DCFS Scholarship Program, and referrals to specialized areas of assistance. State coordinated training for IL Coordinators during the report period included Independent Living Basic Training, Helping Youth with Mental Health Needs Transition to Self-Sufficiency, Independent Living Youth and Domestic Violence, helping foster and adoptive children access and achieve post-secondary education, and Independent Living Roundtables in each region. An additional training, Independent Living: Engaging, Empowering, Emancipating, Working Together, Assessing and Assisting the Adolescent, was sponsored by the University of Wisconsin Southern Child Welfare Training Partnership. The State initiated a special workgroup, Engaging Youth Workgroup, to have IL Coordinators collaborate on problems and solutions regarding youth motivation and participation in IL services.

Several youth meetings were held in 2005. The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) meets monthly, and its intended goal was to educate the DCFS about their experiences in the foster care system and inform the state about needed policy changes. However, as the group has developed, members decided that their main interest is to reach out to children currently in the foster care system. In addition to monthly meetings, 2005 YAC activities included partnering with Kids4Kids (a group of high school students interested in assisting foster care youth) to plan a skating party for teens in foster care. One YAC member participated in the Foster Club All Star Program. Several older youth currently or formerly in foster care participated in panel presentations at various workshops and conferences for child welfare professionals in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

The following table describes Wisconsin's program participants for the current report period and the prior five years:

Table B. CFCIP Program Participants

Calendar Year	Total Eligible Youth (15-21 yrs)	Total Youth Receiving Services (15-21 yrs)	18-21 year-olds Receiving Services	Tribal Youth Receiving Services (15-21 yrs)
2000	2019	1273	Unknown	Unknown
2001	3642	1801	Unknown	Unknown
2002	3982	3383	769	132
2003	4326	3123	678	116
2004	4962	3750	1003	117
2005	4750	3912	1337	121

The following table contains data available on most of the youth receiving services in 2005:

Table C. CFCIP Participant Demographics

Category	Number of Youth	Percentage
Program participants	3912	100
Female	1894	48
Male	2009	51
White	1956	50
African American	1548	40
American Indian	143	4
Asian	45	1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	8	<1
Latino/Hispanic	221	6
Race undetermined	137	4
Tribal membership	121	3
Juvenile justice	1158	30

To help youth transition to self-sufficiency, an Independent Living Skills assessment for each program participant is conducted. Local agencies choose the assessment method and tool. Based on 2005 annual reports, the tools used most frequently are the Daniel Memorial and the Ansell-Casey. Many agencies report using various Independent Living forms as the basis for gathering information and assessing the youth's skill levels. Two of the reported forms are the Independent Living Transition Plan and the Independent Living Checklist, forms that were developed by Wisconsin Independent Living staff. The DCFS incorporated these forms into the Department's form index, making them available on a statewide basis.

Each youth must have a documented Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) that is based on the skill assessment and input from the youth. The youth identifies areas that are

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

most important to him or her, and planned goals to achieve skills and self-sufficiency are focused on these areas. IL Coordinators may work one-on-one with the youth or participate in team planning and discussions that include the youth, social workers, foster parents, parents, school staff, etc.

The goals of Wisconsin's Independent Living Program are to help youth achieve higher rates of adequate shelter, educational attainment, employment and employment stability, healthy relationships, and financial independence. In addition, the state will see lower rates of incarceration, public assistance utilization, and physical and sexual victimization. All youth will receive developmental skills training and independent living preparation services appropriate to their age and development. Services are designed to assure their capacity to exercise judgment commensurate with their age, abilities, and strengths. All youth aged 16 and older exiting out-of-home care will leave care with a minimum of the following:

- Driver's license or preparation for obtaining a driver's license or other access to transportation to school, employment, and other critical activities;
- High school diploma or GED or enrollment in an educational program designed to result in a high school diploma or GED;
- Written employment history;
- Copies of their birth certificate, social security card, and medical records;
- Access to funds adequate to support themselves for a period of three months following exit from care;
- Access to and knowledge of local resources, including but not limited to food pantries, human service agencies, health clinics, and mental health facilities; and
- A safe and stable living environment.

The total number of youth receiving services for CY 2005 is 3,912. Agencies are required to report both the services for each youth and the nature in which the service was delivered: Planned, Spontaneous, Both, None. Planned services are those activities that were preconceived or well-thought through and documented in the Independent Living Transition Plan. Spontaneous refers to services or activities that happen without prior planning, including teachable moments between youth and their caregivers or workers. This may also include services or activities that occur as a result of natural consequences or emergency situations. Services may be provided by the agency receiving the CFCIP funding or may be provided by a private agency under contract with the county, tribe or state agency.

In 2005, planned services were reported as the most frequently used method for assisting youth. The following tables identify the services or financial assistance received and the total number of youth that received this support during the report period:

Table D. Independent Living Services & Participants

Service Received/Financial Assistance	Planned	Spontaneous	Both	None
Secondary education	726	273	829	1305
Post-secondary education	346	217	402	2035
Career preparation	862	428	829	1192
Employment program or vocational training	770	299	636	1541
Budget & financial management	927	459	804	1150
Housing education and home management	890	491	749	1154
Health education	1042	475	805	935
Risk prevention	883	432	770	1142
Mentoring	373	368	506	1731
Total Services	6819	3442	6330	12,185

Table E. Program Outcomes

Outcomes as of December, 2005	# of Youth
Current full-time employment	224
Current part-time employment	883
Employment related skills	1325
Receiving Social Security	387
Receiving scholarships or other educational financial aid (not ETV)	198
Education and Training Voucher Program	213
Housing assistance	309
Other support	1207
Current enrollment/attendance in secondary or post-secondary education or training program	1208
Connection to adult	2518
Substance abuse referral during 2005	382
Incarceration during 2005	411
Public financial assistance	190
Food stamps	246
Homeless	79
Medicaid recipient	576
Health Insurance	156

The most common reason for information not reported on youth cited by agencies is “could not locate youth” for 807 participants. Other reasons include: youth refused to provide some information (32); youth refused to participate in the data collection (63); parent/guardians refused to grant permission (7); and other (165).

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Help youth receive education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment
2005 annual reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections show that all of these agencies are assisting youth in the areas of education, training, and employment related services.

All youth are assessed for independent living skills functioning, including job search and maintenance. These assessments, along with youth input, are used in developing employment-related goals for the Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP).

IL Coordinators ensure that youth receive training and experiential learning that consists of employment related activities. IL workers assist youth with: procuring necessary documents, completing applications, education planning, contacting colleges and employers, interview skills, job search, resume writing, social skills on the job, tolerance, conflict management and resolution, transportation, and gaining volunteer and other work related experience. Community awareness trips and speakers on employment related services and topics are often used. Meetings are arranged with high school counselors and tutors to help assess youth educational needs for employment and provide a support network for youth.

Referral and outreach efforts link youth to community agencies and resources for job seeking, training, and financial assistance. These connections may include typical job service programs, such as: Job Corps, local job centers, Workforce Resource Center, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, job fairs, and other community agencies and private providers. Other linkages may address individual youth needs (e.g., counseling services, medication management, etc) which may impact employment success.

Youth in Milwaukee County may be referred to a pilot project, Former Foster Youth Education and Training Project, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. This project provides youth with services and monthly financial support to enable youth to live independently while attending post-secondary education or training. The project's primary goal is to help youth obtain the education and training needed to become employed and financially self-sufficient. The project manager works closely with the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare to support youth exiting foster care. Currently, this program is only available in Milwaukee County.

Of the 3,912 youth participating in IL services in CY 2005, the following table indicates the number of participants that received planned and/or spontaneous vocational related assistance during the report period:

Table F. Vocational Services

Type of Service/Assistance	# of Youth Receiving Service
Secondary Education	1828
Post Secondary Education	965
Career preparation	2119
Employment programs or vocational training	1705

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

As noted in Table E, 224 youth were reported as employed full time, and 883 youth were employed part-time as of December. The number of youth that acquired employment-related skills during the report period is 1,325.

Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that all of these agencies are assisting youth in the area of post-secondary education and training.

Preparation for post-secondary education must begin several years prior to high school completion. Independent living coordinators continued their work with adolescents to motivate and help them make post-secondary education or training a part of their future plans. Individual education plans containing individualized goals and objectives are developed for each youth. Coordinators work with high school teachers and counselors to ensure that classes and credits are meeting the necessary requirements for post-secondary admission. Where available, youth are connected to pre-college programs.

Independent living services are designed to assess and address youth needs and consist of helping youth with: visiting colleges, applying for admission and financial aide, finding resources available in the community and on campus, obtaining subsidies for educational and training supplies, and dealing with other costs associated with college and training. Caseworkers assist youth with finding safe and stable housing, including individualized efforts to secure housing with relatives or other trusted adults in the area. They also provide ongoing emotional support to youth prior to and while attending the post-secondary institutions.

In 2005, professionals from child welfare, private colleges, technical colleges, and the University of Wisconsin continued their collaboration through the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth (HEOY) Advisory Group. Current HEOY members include representation from Marian College, University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Technical College System, WI Department of Public Instruction, the Division of Children and Family Services and Lad Lake Connections, a private agency serving former foster youth.

In 2005, the HEOY Advisory Group continued its panel presentations designed to increase awareness about youth, problems, and solutions and presented to child welfare caseworkers, various levels of higher education staff, foster parents, and other interested parties across the state. These workshops provide information regarding:

- Educational challenges faced by children placed outside of their homes;
- How to use school counselors as a resource for assisting and motivating youth to attend post-secondary vocational and education programs;
- How to help youth and families access state university and private college services and education;
- DCFS scholarship program and dissemination of application forms;
- Brochures and informational handouts for post secondary education; and
- Education and Training Vouchers Program guidelines

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

In 2005, HEOY met with the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) to discuss their educational experiences and thoughts/beliefs as youth in out-of-home care placement. All members of HEOY and YAC shared their personal stories regarding higher education. YAC members explained barriers they have encountered, such as attending multiple schools and lack of assistance from school staff. They also made suggestions about ways to better engage young people in foster care to participate in higher education and related activities.

In 2005, the scholarship program was funded with ETV Program funds (92%) and CFCIP funds (8%). The program provides scholarship awards for IL eligible youth that have been accepted into an institution of higher education. DCFS scholarship awards to youth during the report period amounted to \$491,277.

The following table summarizes scholarship awards during the past five years:

Table G. DCFS Scholarship Program

Year	# of Scholarship Awards	Amount of Scholarship Awards
2001	30	\$ 55,619
2002	52	\$ 87,545
2003	54	\$ 109,250
2004	104	\$304,079
2005	165	\$491,277

The following table indicates the highest educational certification received and the number of youth in 2005.

Table H. Highest Educational Certification Received

Education	# of Youth
High school diploma or GED/HSED	470
Vocational certificate	25
Vocational license	11
Associate's Degree	4
Bachelor's Degree or higher	0
None	1839
Received special education instruction	645
Completed driver's education	312
Obtained driver's license	184
Completed sex education	421

Provide personal and emotional support through mentors and promotion of interaction with dedicated adults

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that all of these agencies are attempting to connect youth with mentors and other caring adults in their communities. The 2005 data indicates that 1,247 youth received planned or spontaneous mentoring services during the report period. At the end of the year, 2,518 youth were reported as having a connection to an adult.

Independent living coordinators take the lead in connecting youth to caring adults. Many natural connections (e.g., biological family, foster parents, teachers, social workers, clergy, neighbors, employers and coaches) occur and are encouraged. For youth that do not readily develop significant connections with adults in their lives, coordinators assist youth with creating and sustaining such relationships. IL coordinators help youth identify potential adults in their lives and then work with them to build relationships. The Independent Living Transition Plan requires that names and contact information be recorded for peers or adults identified by youth.

Youth in out-of-home care are often connected to mentors, and these relationships usually continue after the youth leaves care. Mentors may be individuals in the community or obtained through community agencies that provide this support service. Support teams may also be used for increasing youth connections to others. IL Coordinators initiate regular contact with any youth that do not connect with mentors or other caring adults. These ongoing connections may be one-on-one with the coordinator or through group activities arranged as part of the IL program. In some areas (e.g., Fond du Lac and Kenosha), transitional living services include a place where youth may drop in and visit staff and other youth at their leisure.

Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years.

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) indicate that all of these agencies have developed services for IL eligible youth aged 18-21 years. The number of 18-21 year olds receiving services during the report period is 1,337. Three youth received Chafee funded room and board assistance in the amount of \$101,457.

Agencies report that the most effective way to maintain contact and serve youth ages 18-21 years that have left out-of-home care placement is to engage their participation prior to exiting out-of-home care. Programs strive to provide youth with their life history and critical documents (e.g., birth certificate, social security cards, and insurance cards) prior to leaving care. All youth are also provided with information about community resources (e.g., food, economic assistance, housing assistance, counseling) prior to leaving care. Many youth maintain contact with former social workers, case managers, or IL coordinators; while others refuse to continue contact with anyone associated with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. Regardless of the level of contact, crisis support is available to all youth.

Services and support for 18-21-year-olds may be provided through the agency and IL Coordinator; however, some agencies contract with private agencies to serve this older population. In Milwaukee County, all youth aging out of care are referred to Lad Lake Connections Program. This private agency provides financial, housing, counseling, employment, and other needed services to former foster care youth. Lad Lake staff work closely with and build positive, familiar relationships with youth. Other Wisconsin private agencies contracted to provide IL services in 2005 include Children's Service

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Society of Wisconsin, Professional Services Group, Lutheran Social Services, Kenosha Human Development Services, Family and Children's Center, Children and Family Services, and Family Services.

Outreach efforts to contact youth that have left care are ongoing and moderately successful. The most frequent contact methods used for youth that left care include letters to the youth and telephone calls to friends, family, and other youth acquaintances. Youth may also be kept informed about available services and assistance through agency newsletters, meeting notices, or group activity notices.

Services typically include financial assistance for youth that have left care. Financial assistance generally includes providing youth with funds or stipends to help pay for rent, utilities, car insurance, health insurance, household furnishings, drivers licenses, and employment and educational expenses. CFCIP funds are often used for these types of expenses.

Youth with disabilities or challenging behaviors may need more specialized services and supports to help them achieve individual levels of self-sufficiency. IL Coordinators and caseworkers ensure that, where appropriate, youth are referred and connected to Long-Term Support Programs for mental health, supportive living arrangements, supported employment, ongoing daily needs, mentoring, and other special needs.

Each eligible youth in out-of-home care must have an Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) that is based on an independent living skills assessment and incorporated into the permanency plan. Each youth exiting out-of-home care after the age of 17 years must have an ILTP that addresses the youth's transition from out-of-home care, identifies ongoing independent living needs and outcomes, and describes how ongoing independent living needs will be met. Youth must participate directly in the development of their plan goals and activities and accept personal responsibility for gaining skills and independence.

The plans, services, and activities should address, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- High school education, post secondary education, or training
- Career planning and employment
- Safe and stable housing
- Transportation
- Health and medical care
- Knowledge/use of community resources and support systems
- Financial self-sufficiency
- Youth's self goals

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

The Independent Living Transition Plan and activities should include:

- Measurable goals and objectives
- Experiential training for youth where possible
- Identification of community resources available and used
- A description of how youth will participate in plan development and activities

Make available vouchers for education and training, including post-secondary education, to youth who have aged out of foster care.

Wisconsin's ETV Program was designed and implemented through a collaborative process facilitated by the State Independent Living Coordinator. Independent Living Coordinators throughout the state were surveyed regarding their experiences with IL services and higher education. They were asked to identify potential services, equipment, and other items that would benefit youth accessing and participating in higher education and training programs. A meeting was held with the HEYOY Advisory Group to gather input about the pending ETV Program and the ongoing DCFS Scholarship Program. All of this input was incorporated into the Federal Application for ETV Program funding and state ETV Program Guidelines.

In 2005, 71 counties, three tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections received ETV funding to locally support and assist youth with post-secondary related activities and costs. The DCFS Scholarship Program budget was increased to \$287,865 for scholarship awards in 2005, but actual awards amounted to \$491,277.

As reported in Table A, 204 youth received ETV Program support and/or financial assistance from local agencies. 165 youth received scholarship awards through the ETV funded DCFS Scholarship Program. The most common use of ETV Program funding was the payment of tuition and fees, followed by the purchase of consumables (e.g., books, supplies, lab fees, uniforms, etc.). Agencies also assisted youth by funding transportation-related costs (e.g., car repairs, gas vouchers, bus passes, etc.), room and board assistance, and purchasing equipment such as computers and calculators.

Barriers

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program is designed to address the CFCIP plan goals and objectives, the June 2000 *Independent Living for Children In Out-Of-Home Care* report, the Chafee Act, and individual youth needs. Several barriers to achieving desirable outcomes in all areas for all youth were encountered. A summary of the most commonly reported barriers follows:

- Many youth, especially 18-21-year-olds, are resistive to agency involvement. They are not motivated and refuse to participate in IL activities. Some do not desire or see the need to pursue higher education. After leaving care, it is often difficult or impossible to locate them.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- Many youth that refuse to work with the local IL services return for assistance only when they are in crisis, making it much more difficult to effectively serve and support them.
- Youth with cognitive delays and emotional challenges are difficult to serve effectively as are youth with multiple legal infractions, mental health issues and youth with multiple legal infractions are difficult to serve effectively. Many adult service systems will not accept or work with these youth and funding sources are discontinued and/or less available upon their leaving the child welfare system.
- Agencies are unable to find enough suitable mentors for foster youth. Youth are on waiting lists, and many of the challenges associated with the youth wear out the volunteers.
- Many secondary schools are not assisting foster youth with high school completion and preparation for post-secondary education.
- In many rural communities there is a lack of employment opportunities, transportation, service providers, and community resources; all of which are critical to providing quality IL support and assist youth to become self sufficient.
- Some foster parents and other caregivers may not see it as their responsibility to help youth gain IL skills. Engaging caregivers to assist and follow-through with youth plans is sometimes challenging. Life skills development is seen as an extra burden and they refuse to participate in training. Also, some youth that reunify with their parent(s) lose interest in their previous agreed upon goals to complete high school and pursue higher education.
- Some child welfare agencies refuse to allow youth to participate in driver's education and obtain drivers licenses while in care. The commonly cited reason for this is the perceived high liability exposure to the agency or foster parents.
- There is a lack of health care options for youth leaving care after 18 years of age.
- Transitional Housing options are greatly needed. There is a lack of housing options for 17-year-olds who do not or will not remain in OHC placement. It is also challenging to obtain housing for youth 18-21 years due to their lack of steady or adequate income, landlords' unwillingness to rent to them, and their inability to manage a household. Youth in foster care are not allowed to apply for housing and/or housing waiting lists until they reach 18 years of age, yet many 18-year-olds are not socially or emotionally ready to live on their own.
- Youth with lower skill levels, training and experience have a difficult time finding long-term employment necessary to achieve self-sufficiency.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- Coordinating services across counties, Wisconsin, and other states is difficult due to the inconsistencies in IL programs and services.
- Agencies report ongoing service challenges due to a lack of sufficient IL funding to support their programs. In addition due to a lack of IL funding, decreases in IL services may also occur due to agency budget cuts where other funds were used to support these services for youth.
- IL staff turnover negatively impacts foster youth, many of whom have abandonment/loss/grief issues. Trust and consistency are greatly needed from the adults supporting these youth.

Consultation with Tribes

Consultation with tribes regarding the Chafee Independent Living program occurs through the tribal consultation mechanisms described in the Indian Child Welfare section of this plan. Currently, counties provide Independent Living services to Indian children in placements that counties are fiscally responsible for. Three tribes currently have Independent Living contracts with DCFS.

Planned Activities for FFY 2006

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program will continue to focus on quality services and supports for youth in and exiting the foster care system.

- DCFS will allocate federal CFCIP and ETV Program funds to local agencies for direct services to youth.
- In 2006, the Chapin Hall Center for Children 3-state study will be completed. The DCFS, in partnership with Chapin Hall, Iowa and Illinois, will review the results of the study and in 2007 begin to analyze the implications for the Wisconsin Independent Living Program.
- DCFS will continue to operate the DCFS Scholarship Program, increasing the allocation for the program from the 2006 level of funding when the opportunity arises.
- The Higher Education Opportunities for Youth Advisory Group will continue its work to increase awareness and achieve higher levels of education for youth exiting foster care.
- The newly hired Independent Living Coordinator will assess statewide program needs and work with local agencies to develop a plan for meetings, training, etc.
- When Federal reporting requirements are released, we will begin to incorporate these requirements into eWiSACWIS and/or other IL data reporting systems.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Use of Funds

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program allocates the Federal CFCIP and ETV Program funds to 71 counties, 3 tribes, the Division of Juvenile Corrections and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare for the provision of independent living services and supports for youth in and exiting foster care and described throughout this report. In 2005, funds were allocated for use as follows:

CFCIP Funds – Independent Living	Amount
State administration of program	\$ 212,380
Local services	\$1,799,728
State/local match	\$503,027
ETV Program Funds	Amount
State administration of program	\$25,000
Local services and DCFS Scholarship Program	\$672,591
State/local match	\$174,398

Actual expenditures for Chafee allocated Independent Living funds for FY 2004 were \$1,968,195.70, for FY 2005 \$1,924,896.80, and through July 2006 \$1,096,815.84. Funds were used for supplies, training materials and incentives for youth, room and board, as well as administration costs and training for case workers and foster parents. There are no planned changes for 2007. A detailed break-out of the expenditures is as follows:

Independent Living Grants

Grant Number G-0301WI1420

Actual Expenditures-FFY 04 \$908,562.11

Grant Number G-0401WI1420

Actual Expenditures-FFY 04 \$1,059,633.60

Actual Expenditures-FFY 05 \$895,642.40

Grant Number G-0501WI1420

Actual Expenditures-FFY 05 \$1,029,254.47

Actual Expenditures thru July-FFY 06 \$549,819.18

Grant Number G-0601WI1420

Actual Expenditures thru July-FFY 06 \$1,096,815.84

In 2004, \$98,114 accounts for 6% of Chafee funds allocated to the counties and 5% of the total Federal grant allocated to Wisconsin. 303 youth received room and board assistance.

In 2005, \$101,457 accounts for 6% of Chafee funds allocated to the counties and 5% of the total Federal grant allocated to Wisconsin. 259 youth received room and board assistance.

In 2004, 176 youth received local ETV vouchers for post-secondary education and 104 received the state scholarship. In 2005, 204 youth received local ETV vouchers and 165 received the state scholarship. From 2004 to 2005 local ETV participation increased by 16% and scholarship participation increased by 60%. It is not possible to determine the

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

number of youth that will attend college, or receive ETV assistance in 2007, but we estimate that there will be an increase of 10%, totaling 406 youth who will receive ETV assistance in 2006 and 447 youth in 2007.

Counties reported the following expenditures for ETV

2004 ETV expenditures were \$527,112

2005 ETV expenditures were \$710,387

According to CARS report, the following was expended. The discrepancy may be a result of how items were documented in CARS.

Grant Number G-0301WICETV

Actual Expenditures -FFY 04 \$472,689.00

Grant Number G-0401WICETV

Actual Expenditures-FFY 05 \$554,677.00

Grant Number G-0501WICETV

Actual Expenditures thru July-FFY 06 \$370,108.33

Year-to-date participation numbers currently available for FY 06 are regarding the DCFS Scholarship (funded by ETV for tuition, books and fees), which is administered by the State. Year-to-date participation approved for the DCFS Scholarship Program is 112 youths. Counties receive allocations of ETV funds to administer for other allowable expenses to support youth in their post-secondary education, and report on these funds annually in December, so we do not have data on what counties have used to date.

We are not currently tracking which youth receive ETV funds for the first time, as this was not in the draft of Outcomes and Measurement Topics from the National Youth in Transition Information System provided to states in 2001, which we have used as our reporting guide. It does not appear to be an expectation in the proposed rules either, however, when we do the enhancements for the proposed rules, we will include this as an item.

It is difficult for us to track first timers, as some youth who apply for the scholarship do not apply for local ETV funds and visa versa, while others apply for both. For example, a youth may have received some ETV assistance locally one year and then applied for the scholarship to the State the next year. It would be unknown to the state if that particular youth received ETV funding previously.

Tribal Child Welfare

Introduction

In conjunction with the Tribal Affairs Office of the Department, the DCFS has several ongoing practices to ensure effective communication with the 11 federally-recognized tribes in Wisconsin and to support tribal child welfare services. The DCFS gives funding directly to the tribes through the Consolidated Family Services Allocation, which eliminates individualized funding streams and assists tribes in providing services to families. The DCFS consults with tribes before issuing standards and policies addressing child welfare concerns and involves tribal staff on interview panels for state staff positions. Tribes, at their option, receive TANF funding for the Kinship Care program and attend Kinship Care program meetings.

Currently, funding for Indian children placed in out-of-home care by tribal courts is provided through written agreements, called "161 Agreements," with individual counties. While the original intent of the 161 Agreements was to allow county payment for out-of-home care placements ordered through the tribal courts, some of the agreements have since been expanded to cover support and treatment services to Indian children in care and their families, IV-E eligibility determinations, permanency planning requirements, independent living, and, in some cases, additional agreements related to child protective service investigations and removals. The DCFS monitors the development of the 161 Agreements and has, at times, arranged for a facilitator to help in negotiating the agreements. The 161 Agreements require communication and negotiations between county departments and tribes. We will be working with tribal representatives in 2006 to examine the effectiveness of the 161 Agreement process and to develop recommendations for improvement.

At the present time, 10 of the 11 tribes in Wisconsin have established tribal courts to deal with child welfare issues. The Tribe with no tribal court and, in some cases, tribes with courts will refer cases to the county child welfare agency. In most cases, when an allegation of abuse or neglect of an Indian child comes into a county agency, the county agency conducts the investigation in conjunction with child welfare staff of the tribe.

Consultation with Tribes

Communication with the tribes is done through tribal chairpersons or presidents, as the official contact persons for the tribes, and tribal human service program coordinators. Chairpersons and program coordinators receive DCFS letters, numbered memos, and other program instructions.

The primary forum for having group conversations with tribal officials is through the recently established annual consultation meeting between the Secretary and Division Administrators of the Department and the annual DHFS/Tribal conference addressing human service issues with tribes. Meetings with tribal officials on child welfare issues are coordinated with the conference. Other group meetings with tribal officials are scheduled as needed to discuss specific issues. For issues involving individual tribes, DCFS

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

communicates with the tribe involved through the tribal chairperson or president or other tribal officials. Individual meetings with tribes are held as needed with DHFS Tribal Affairs Office or Area Administration staff representing DHFS or with DCFS directly.

Bimonthly staff meetings are held between DCFS and the Tribal Affairs Office staff and Indian Child Welfare staff of the tribes to discuss Indian child welfare issues. These staff meetings are used to discuss issues of mutual concern, establish strategies to implement the tribal priorities, and identify Indian child welfare issues that require discussion at higher levels with tribal officials and Department managers. Recent staff meetings have focused on ICWA training, adoption issues related to tribal children, codification of the Indian Child Welfare Act into Chapters 48 and 938, Wis. Stats., and the ongoing implementation of the Program Enhancement Plan.

In November of 2005, the DHFS held its first annual consultation meeting with tribal leaders. The meeting resulted in each Division within the DHFS developing an implementation plan for CY 2006 (see attached). This policy was considered a model by the Office of the Governor and was used as a template by all other state Departments in developing their own tribal consultation policies. This state consultation policy incorporates the principles in the federal Department of Health and Human Services policy on tribal consultation.

A meeting was held on April 19, 2005 between DHFS and tribal staff to begin implementation of the policy, including the development of curricula for training DHFS staff on tribal issues and for training tribal staff on DHFS programs and procedures, including biennial budget development, to increase the timeliness and effectiveness of tribal input into DHFS policies and budgets.

Inter-Tribal Child Welfare Training Partnership

In 2004, the Child Welfare Training Council agreed with Wisconsin's tribes to form an Inter-tribal Child Welfare (ICW) Training Partnership to better address the training needs of Indian child welfare staff. While tribes are members of the regional training partnerships and attend training with county staff, the unique training needs of tribal staff and Indian child welfare practice were not being met effectively.

The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay agreed to provide administrative support to the ICW training Partnership and DCFS agreed to provide financial support for the ICW Training Manager position. The training manager was hired in December 2004 and participates as a member of the Child Welfare Training Council. The ICW Training Partnership is currently working with the 11 tribes to assess training needs of Indian child welfare staff and develop strategies for meeting those needs.

Indian Child Welfare Act Training

Training on the ICWA is provided by the Child Welfare Training Partnerships in Wisconsin. A detailed ICWA training is offered in addition to the core course on legal

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

issues, which includes information on the ICWA. The Training Partnerships have made available via the web the short on-line ICWA training produced by the National Indian Child Welfare Association. The DCFS provides technical assistance to county child welfare agencies when questions on ICWA compliance arise.

The training addresses the five major components of ICWA, including:

- 1) Identification of Indian children by the county child welfare agency;
- 2) Notification of Indian parents, Indian custodians, and tribes of state proceedings involving Indian children and their right to intervene;
- 3) Special placement preferences for Indian children;
- 4) Active efforts to prevent the breakup of the Indian family; and
- 5) Use of tribal courts in child welfare matters.

The Milwaukee Training Partnership piloted a full day ICWA training in 2005 and the ICWA Partnership is working on adapting it for statewide use.

Tribal Child Welfare Priorities

As part of planning activities for the 2005-2009 CFSP and the PEP, Wisconsin's tribes and DCFS worked collaboratively to develop a list of seven tribal priorities for improving child welfare services for Indian children and families. These priorities are:

2. Identifying children as Indian children
3. Training on ICWA, Tribal Codes and Ordinances, and Cultural Issues
4. Adoptions
5. 161 Agreements
6. Foster Home Placements and Resources
7. Safety of Children in Their Own Homes and in Out-of-Home Care
8. Title IV-E or Other Funding for Tribes

Using the bimonthly tribal child welfare meetings, DCFS continues to work with tribes on the seven priorities. As agreements are reached, state policy and training curriculum will be updated to reflect the agreements with tribes. The updated April 2006 draft of the seven priorities is attached to this plan.

Progress was made during 2005 on several of the priorities. In December of 2004, four templates were added to eWiSACWIS which provide direction and assistance to county caseworkers on determining whether a child is an Indian child. All counties are now required to use these templates in order to assure that the protections and rights of children and families under ICWA are recognized and protected. During 2005, technical assistance was provided to counties to assure that the concepts underlying the templates were being implemented and that the templates were being used to notify tribes when Indian children or children who might be Indian children entered the child welfare system.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

The DHFS requested that the Legislative Reference Bureau draft revisions to Chapters 48 (the Children's Code) and 938 (the Juvenile Justice Code) to reflect the requirements under the Indian Child Welfare Act. The drafting was not accomplished in time for introduction to the 2005-06 Legislature, but the draft was discussed with the ICW Directors and will be further discussed by two workgroups over the Summer of 2006. An electronic draft of that proposal has been sent to Krista Thomas, but, due to its length, it is not attached to this report.

Indian Child Welfare Consultant

The DCFS has, effective November 7, 2005, employed a person in the Bureau of Programs and Policies whose responsibilities relate to all aspects of the Indian Child Welfare Act, the relationships between the tribes and counties and the tribes and the DHFS, and implementation of the tribal priorities. This position has been filled by Ms Loa Porter, a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, who has substantial experience in child welfare in both Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Kinship Care

Program Description

The Kinship Care program is a child welfare-oriented financial assistance program funded under the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant that was initiated in 1997 when the Non-Legally Responsible Relative (NLRR) component of the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was terminated. Kinship Care is child welfare program designed to support children at-risk or currently involved in the child protective services system to remain within their extended family structure.

Kinship Care is used to fund voluntary living arrangements with relatives; or court-ordered living arrangements with relatives where the child has been determined to be at-risk of or is currently in need of protection or services (CHIPS). The basic program eligibility requirements are as follows:

1. The basic needs of the child can be better met with the relative than with the parent;
2. The placement with the relative is in the best interests of the child; and
3. The child currently or would potentially meet the requirements for court jurisdiction as being in need of protection or services if the child were to remain with his or her parent(s).

The Kinship Care program is administered locally by county agencies, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and 10 tribes. Agencies determine initial and ongoing eligibility, and make monthly payments in the amount of \$215 per child per month to eligible children and caregivers.

Kinship Care payments are made to relatives by counties and tribes that participate in the program. To comply with federal TANF reporting requirements, a data collection system entitled the Kinship Care Tracking System (KCTS) was developed to establish baseline program information and utilization trends. That data system initially involved paper-based reporting from local agencies, but was later converted to a web-based system in November 2001. As counties implemented the eWiSACWIS system, Kinship Care reporting was done in eWiSACWIS. While all counties are currently using eWiSACWIS for Kinship Care, KCTS will continue to be used by the 10 tribes that do not use eWiSACWIS.

Program Requirements

In November 2000, DCFS implemented administrative rule Chapter HFS 58 to support statewide consistency in basic operating procedures regarding the use of the Kinship Care Program and the quality of care provided to children placed or otherwise living with relatives under this program. Kinship Care roundtables were held with county and tribal staff to provide training and discuss regulations and ongoing practices. Direct technical assistance continues to be provided to individual programs as requested.

In July 2002, 2001 Wis. Act 109 was enacted and included provisions clarifying permanency planning requirements for Court Ordered Kinship Care (COKC) cases.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Although Milwaukee County had been completing permanency plans for COKC cases since 1998; counties that had not historically completed permanency plans for COKC cases were required to complete plans by the end of CY 2002.

Finally, to help promote a youth's transition to independence, program eligibility for Kinship care was expanded to support care of youth up to 19 years of age if they are attending school, are in good academic standing, and are expected to receive a diploma. This age limit is now the same as foster care.

2005 Program Activity

Counties and tribes receive a sum certain annual allocation based on the year's prior caseload counts. In some instances, local agencies may place children on a wait list for Kinship Care payments until funds become available. While counties/tribes are hesitant to remove children from waitlists (as they are required to sustain all such children into the next fiscal year), DCFS has developed a process to help ensure that more eligible families are able to receive payments if they reside in communities where a funding shortage occurs and wait lists are implemented. DCFS analyzes the current year data for each agency and shifts funds from programs with under-spending to programs with waiting lists and/or over-spending prior to year's end. Although the number of Kinship Care cases rose in 2005, DCFS was able to cover all children whose cases were paid with local funds.

Currently, the TANF Kinship Care payment for eligible children and relative caregivers is set at \$215 per child per month; an amount that has not been changed since the Kinship Care program was created in 1997. Wisconsin remains committed to providing support for children receiving care from kinship care providers. As such, the Department has increased its annual statewide benefits allocation to local entities from \$9,014,200 in CY 2005, to \$9,558,900 for CY 2006, and statewide assessment benefits from \$672,196 in CY 2005 to \$827,700 in CY 2006.

In 2005 the Kinship Care Specialist worked with the eWiSACWIS and KCTS teams to develop a customized training that provides county/tribal staff with a "hands-on" approach to both programmatic and technical issues related to data reporting. These training sessions have been scheduled regionally for CY 2006, in order to provide all workers with full access to the training.

While the statewide Kinship Care caseload had been relatively constant prior to 2004, caseloads have been steadily increasing. The total number of children receiving Kinship Care payments throughout the state of Wisconsin in 2005 was 12,668. In addition, another 382 children were on a waiting list for payments. About 3,233 children on the 2005 caseload were in court-ordered Kinship Care placements with relatives subject to permanency planning and ongoing case management and 9,435 children were living with relatives on a voluntary basis. In many instances, COKC cases become voluntary cases if the child is permanently placed with the relative and the court order is ended.

Title IV-E Foster Care

Introduction

The Title IV-E foster care program provides out-of-home placement and permanency planning services to children in need of placement due to abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency or other service needs. Out-of-home placements include foster homes licensed by counties, tribes, DCFS or private child placing agencies, treatment foster homes licensed by private child placing agencies, group foster homes licensed by DCFS, and residential care centers (RCCs) licensed by DCFS. Children receiving Kinship Care payments placed with relatives under court order (COKC) are also in out-of-home care state law and entitled to Title IV-E protections and permanency planning services.

The out-of-home care caseload in Wisconsin is approximately 7,600 at any point in time, with approximately 4,800 children placed in foster homes, 900 in treatment foster homes, 1,000 in group homes or RCCs, and 1,500 in COKC. Of the total caseload, approximately 38% is located in Milwaukee County, 5% are pre-adoptive children with the Special needs Adoption Program awaiting adoptive placement, and the remaining 57% are managed by county child welfare agencies. Youth in placement for juvenile delinquency reasons account for approximately 20% of the point-in-time caseload, but over 30% of the total entries to out-of-home care over the course of the year.

Under Title IV-E, reasonable efforts must be made to prevent removal from the home and to reunify the child once removed. If reunification is not possible, other forms of permanency must be pursued including adoption, guardianship and permanent placement with relatives. As a last resort, children may remain in out-of-home care on a long-term basis until they reach the age of 18. Children can remain in foster care until age 19 if they are completing high school or an equivalent degree.

Permanency Planning

The statewide Out-of-Home Care Committee is responsible for the permanency plan items included in the Program Enhancement Plan. In 2005, the OHC Committee developed a guide that provides information for people interested or currently serving as administrative review panel members. This guide includes basic information about permanency planning, information contained in permanency plans, evaluations of permanency plans, and the roles and responsibilities of permanency plan review panel members. The guide was issued by Informational Memo in October 2005.

The committee also developed an information memo providing clarification about definitions, procedures, and content of initial and subsequent permanency plans (including transition plans for independent living), permanency plan reviews, and permanency plan hearings, an agency's authority to complete termination of parental rights (TPR) prior to identification of an adoptive family, and the application of exceptions to the reasonable efforts requirements. This memo was issued in December 2005.

The DCFS has developed draft administrative rule Chapter HFS 44 related to permanency planning and reasonable efforts. This rule establishes state policies that have the force of law related to the requirements for assuring that reasonable efforts are made to prevent a placement, to reunify a child with his or her family, or to achieve another permanent placement for the child. The rule also describes the processes and practices related to conducting administrative hearings (i.e., permanency plan reviews). Staff in the DCFS reconvened members of a workgroup that revised drafts of Ch. HFS 44 to participate in the continued work to finalize HFS 44. This workgroup began meeting in January 2006.

The DCFS is working with the Department of Corrections, Division of Juvenile Corrections to determine how the draft rule will apply to juvenile justice clients in out-of-home care. When the rule is promulgated, the DCFS and the Division of Juvenile Corrections will issue a joint communication to counties.

At the end of 2005, the committee began work on the development of a memo to clarify the rights and responsibilities of foster parents related to court proceedings. The draft memo includes information about the rights of foster parents to receive notice of any court hearing or permanency plan review related to a child in their care and the opportunity for them to be heard at the hearing or permanency plan review. It further clarifies that foster parents are not parties to a hearing or permanency plan review nor are foster parents guaranteed the opportunity to make a statement in court. The memo also includes a newly developed optional form for foster parents to use when submitting information to the court regarding a hearing or permanency plan review to assist them in considering what information they would like to provide.

DCFS continues to work with the Director of State Courts Office and the Division of Juvenile Correction to provide training to child welfare staff, juvenile justice staff, judges, and attorneys on Act 109 requirements and ASFA. A member of the Director of State Courts Office and a retired judge serve as members of the Out-of-Home Care Committee to assure communication between the DCFS and court system regarding policy and practice items associated with out-of-home care.

Placement Stability

The DCFS conducted a targeted case review to better understand its performance in two of the four permanency outcomes. During the summer of 2005, the DCFS Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) team completed a targeted case review of almost 200 cases selected from Dane, Rock, Sheboygan, and Winnebago Counties which showed higher-entry rates or frequent placement changes based on the eWiSACWIS reports developed by DCFS. As a result of the review, DCFS issued a report outlining the results of the review and drafted an Office of Program Evaluation and Planning (OPEP) Operations Memo that provided direction to agencies regarding how shelter and detention placements in eWiSACWIS should be documented. The results from the review were analyzed by the Office of Program Evaluation and Planning (OPEP) and distributed in a report to the 4 counties. It also provided a basis for eWiSACWIS data entry guidelines to all counties related to the documentation of shelter care and detention placements.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

The Out-of-Home Care Committee in 2005 also worked on the development of a Trial Home Visit policy to get more standardization across the state about the use and documentation of Trial Home Visits. Agencies are not required to use Trial Home Visits; this policy will require those agencies using Trial Home Visits to follow specific criteria. This policy was reviewed by the Child Welfare Case Process Committee as well.

Supports to Foster Parents

DCFS recognizes the critical link between the success of a child served within the child welfare system and the supports provided to those who care for these children. Through the creation of the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, the commitment to increase foster care reimbursement, and increased support for the training of foster families, the DCFS worked throughout the past year to better support foster families and improve the foster care system.

Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center

Both Governor Doyle's *KidsFirst* Initiative and Wisconsin's Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) include the creation of a statewide Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center. On January 1, 2005, the contract for the creation of the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center was issued to a consortium of three agencies: Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, PATH Wisconsin, Inc., and St. Aemilian-Lakeside. The Resource Center formally opened in April 2005 and had its four staff positions filled by the end of June 2005. With support from Governor Jim Doyle and Secretary Helene Nelson at kick-off events, the Resource Center opened three offices in Milwaukee, Sheboygan, and Eau Claire in the spring 2005. Over the past year, the Resource Center staff have done extensive outreach with county, private, and tribal agencies and foster parent associations statewide. At the end of 2005, the Resource Center had begun work with the DCFS on the development of a new statewide foster care recruitment campaign.

In addition to the ongoing work the Resource Center is conducting, they are also responsible for developing a statewide foster parent handbook included in Item K in the PEP. In the fall of 2005, Resource Center staff solicited foster care coordinators and foster parents to serve on a workgroup to begin development of the handbook. After conducting both statewide and nationwide research on the content of foster parent handbooks, the Resource Center led multiple workgroup meetings during the fall and early winter 2005 to develop a Wisconsin-specific model foster parent handbook.

Financial Support

In the July of 2005, Governor Doyle signed his 2005-2007 budget which included a 5% increase in the basic foster home maintenance rate effective January 1, 2006. The basic maintenance rates for foster homes in Wisconsin are:

Age	Prior Law	January 1, 2006
0 through 4	\$302	\$317
5 through 11	329	346
12 through 14	375	394
15 and older	391	411

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

The Out-of-Home Care Committee also discussed the possibility of using the exceptional foster care reimbursement rate to support the placement of siblings together in foster homes. DCFS INFO MEMO 2006-01 was drafted by the committee and issued on January 17, 2006 to promote the placement of siblings together in foster care and clarify the ability of agencies to use the foster care exceptional rate to facilitate the placement of sibling groups.

Supportive Services

In 2005, the DCFS continued ongoing work with foster parents, adoptive parents, foster youth and foster care coordinators to identify other areas and services to support the foster care system. The Out-of-Home Care Committee gathered a variety of information about foster parent service and support needs from recent foster parent satisfaction surveys, previous reports identifying foster parent service needs, foster care coordinators, and Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center development meetings with stakeholders. Out of this process, the committee developed a report outlining the strengths of services that agencies are currently providing and additional service and support needs. This memo and attached report are currently in the DCFS approval process.

The Out-of-Home Care Committee also developed a memo restating the permanency planning requirement that agencies include information about services provided to the child, child's family, and child's foster family. The memo provides clarification about where in the permanency plan agencies should document any services provided to a child's foster family and contains an optional Out-of-Home Care Support Plan form for agencies to use if they choose to develop separate support plans with their foster homes. This memo is currently in the DCFS approval process.

In addition, the DCFS has worked with the Division of Health Care Financing to develop a pilot to provide managed health care services to children in out-of-home care in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare system. A managed care provider has been selected for the pilot. The pilot is expected to improve access to health, dental and mental health services for foster children and test the use of managed care for the out-of-home care population.

Foster Parent Training Resources

In Wisconsin, counties, private child placing agencies, and some tribes license foster homes and also maintain responsibility for recruiting, training, and re-licensing foster homes. In 2005, the DCFS received applications from over 37 counties to access Title IV-E funding for competency-based, pre-service training for foster parents through a funding mechanism established in 2002. In order for counties to obtain funding, their applications must include specific competencies and use child welfare staff and foster parents as co-trainers. In addition, the training must be interactive and encourage discussion of issues and skills of both the foster parents and caseworkers.

The goal of this IV-E foster parent training program is to assure quality, competency-based pre-placement, foundation, and ongoing training to foster parents and to provide increased funding to counties who meet the established expectations. Many smaller

counties who did not have the resources or staff to conduct their own training sessions partnered with surrounding counties to provide the training to their foster families. Additional counties provided the training or other training curriculums without state oversight or financial support.

Wisconsin does not have a mandated training program for foster parents, but many licensing agencies have their own orientation and training requirements. Building upon the success many agencies have had with training of foster parents, the PEP focuses on foster parent training as an area that will be examined in upcoming months. The Foster Parent Training Committee is working to identify and provide additional resources in order for counties to have the tools to meet the requirements for receiving funding through the state.

Programmatic Supports

The DCFS has identified several program areas critical to the quality of care that foster parents are able to provide for children temporarily in their care. These programmatic supports include ensuring provision of information critical to the care of children in temporary out-of-home care, participation in and access to competency-based training, and the recruitment and continued availability of qualified licensed foster care providers.

As a part of an additional PEP item related to assisting agencies in documenting and assessing a child's special needs and providing information to foster parents, the DCFS began revisions to the existing Information to Foster Parents form. The revisions aim to categorize the information in the form so that a child's needs in a specific area will be more readily apparent and will better inform both case workers and foster parents about areas in which a child may need additional assessment or treatment. It also now includes a section describing a child's crisis or emergency response plan, what may trigger a child to have a crisis, and previous interventions that may have worked with the child in the event of a crisis.

Title IV-E Eligibility

DCFS performs Title IV-E eligibility determinations on behalf of counties through a Statewide Eligibility Unit (SEU) that operates in the five DCFS regional offices and the Milwaukee Eligibility Unit (MEU) that operates in the BMCW Administrative Office. DCFS contracts for SEU and MEU services and the contractor is responsible for collecting information necessary for eligibility and making eligibility recommendations. The eligibility recommendations are reviewed and approved by state staff, either BPP, OPEP, BMCW or OSF Area Administrative staff depending on the location and type of case.

The state approval of contractor recommendations is currently done using an automated sign-off process within the eWiSACWIS system. The automated signoff process was implemented in September 2005.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Wisconsin underwent a Title IV-E secondary review of 150 cases in May 2005 as a result of having exceeded the error threshold in the initial IV-E review in 2002. Wisconsin passed the secondary review with only one error case and only five cases with ineligible payments. During the course of the secondary reviews, questions were raised by the federal review team regarding the extent that Wisconsin court orders provide clear responsibility for placement and care of children. The questions were resolved by seeking an opinion from the Wisconsin Attorney General in June 2005. To clarify the placement and care responsibility, DCFS will continue to seek statutory changes in the next legislative session and modifications to standard court forms once the statutory changes have been made.

Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare

Introduction

In 1998, DCFS implemented the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) to assume direct administrative responsibility for child welfare service delivery in Milwaukee County. State staff assess reports of abuse and neglect, perform child protective service intake and assessment functions, and refer cases for further services. Contracted service providers deliver in-home safety services, ongoing case management, and other child welfare functions.

The *BMCW Standards of Practice* continue to be updated to support the consistency, quality, and timeliness of child protective services and out-of-home care. The *Standards* include assessment of and response to ensure child safety and the development and implementation of service plans to support family change.

Staff training continues to be a major emphasis of the BMCW to improve the quality of services. All new staff receive extensive training on the *BMCW Standards* prior to taking on cases. In cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the BMCW established a child welfare training partnership in 2001 that offers courses to improve the core competencies of caseworkers. The core courses were offered beginning in July 2002. In cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), the BMCW implemented a competency-based supervisory training program based on the supervisory curricula produced by the CWLA. State and vendor agency supervisors and key management staff continue to participate together in this specialized training program designed to support supervisory competencies, leadership skills, and organizational performance.

The BMCW continues to emphasize desired program outcomes within the Milwaukee child welfare program through the use of performance-based contracts. Performance outcomes consistent with the federal performance indicators are incorporated into service contracts with service agencies. Contractor performance is monitored through comprehensive case and program reviews by the BMCW Program Evaluation Managers.

Settlement Agreement

In December 2002, a settlement agreement was approved by the Federal district court for the Jeanine B. case involving the BMCW. The settlement agreement ended several years of litigation in the Jeanine B. case over compliance with federal Title IV-E requirements and established a number of program improvement goals for the BMCW. The settlement agreement includes monitoring performance over a 3-year period (Calendar Years 2003 - 2005) with improvement targets for each of the three years. The performance standards and monitoring items are in the areas of Safety, Permanency and Well Being.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

The following data present the performance of BMCW during Period 3 (January 1, 2005 – December 31, 2005) of the Settlement Agreement. The data is presented in three distinct categories: targets the BMCW met or exceeded for Period 3, targets not met for Period 3; and items reported for monitoring purposes only. Following these descriptions is a table that shows actual year-end Period 1, Period 2 and Period 3 performance for each category. *Category 1 - Settlement sections where the BMCW met or exceeded Period 3 targets:*

PERMANENCY

- ❑ **Adoption and Safe Families Act (Belated ASFA):** At least 90% of the children in out-of-home-care for more than 15 of the most recent 22 months who were not in compliance with ASFA at the start of the review period, shall have a TPR petition filed on their behalf or an allowable ASFA exception documented in their case by the end of the period. The BMCW achieved 93% compliance compared to the performance standard of 90%. The percentage was calculated against the baseline of 206 children identified at the beginning of Period 3. The BMCW has been successful in meeting this performance standard during all of the past three years of the Settlement Agreement.
- ❑ The Settlement requires that the BMCW assess the length of stay of children in OHC placements greater than 24 months (measured against baseline of 5,533). The Settlement requires no more than 25% in care greater than 24 months. The BMCW met this performance expectation with a YTD average of 23%.
- The Settlement also requires the BMCW to determine the number of children who have been reunified within 12 months of entry into OHC. The Period 3, performance standard was 71%. Period 3 actual performance was, 72% of the 677 children reunified, were reunified within 12 months of entering an out-of-home care placement.

SAFETY

- ❑ The Settlement requires that (1) CPS reports must be referred for investigation to the Independent Investigation Agency within 3 business days, and (2) Independent Investigations at the agency need to be assigned to an Investigator within 3 days of referral, and (3) all independent investigations need to be completed and have a determination within 60 days of referral. In all three areas, the BMCW exceeded the Period 3 expectation of 90% with 99% for item 1, 99% for item 2, and 99% for item 3.

WELL-BEING

- ❑ The Settlement tracks the average number of family cases per case manager. For Period 3, the BMCW was in overall compliance with the expectation with approximately 10 families assigned to each Ongoing Case Manager with a performance standard of less than 11 families per case manager. The Settlement also requires that the Ongoing Case Managers have direct monthly face-to-face contact

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

with a minimum of 90% of the children (children in Milwaukee and contiguous counties). The BMCW met this standard for Period 3 with a YTD average of 97%.

Category 2 - Settlement sections where the BMCW partially met or did not meet Period 3 performance standards:

- The Plaintiffs and the Department are holding negotiations regarding to further define the performance compliance measure for assessment and stabilization centers.

Diagnostic/Assessment Centers. This provision states “*By December 31, 2003, BMCW shall develop special diagnostic/assessment centers for children over 12 years of age who need further assessment in order to determine the appropriate placement. Placement in such centers shall not exceed 30 days, or 60 days if the placement is extended in accordance with applicable state law.*”

Although I.D.7. limits the length of stay in diagnostic/assessment centers (indicating 30 to 60 days, as is consistent with the Department's administrative rules), the Agreement does not establish a performance standard against which BMCW's performance is to be measured:

- The BMCW met the 60-day limit for 82.1% (880) of the children, and
- exceeded the limit for 17.9% (192) of the children

PERMANENCY

- **Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) timeliness requirement, timely filing of TPRs:** BMCW achieved a performance level of **29.2%** compared to the requirement that at least 90% of children in out-of-home care for 15 of 22 months must have a termination of parental rights (TPR) petition filed on their behalf, or an ASFA exception documented in their case by the end of the 15th month in care.

NOTE: During Periods 1 and 2, the ASFA measure for compliance (I.B.2.) was calculated using a different set of parameters compared to Period 3. Under the previous method of measurement, the BMCW achieved compliance with the established performance standards. A review of how the performance was calculated was done by the Wisconsin State Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) in February of 2006. The LAB concluded that the ASFA timeframe the BMCW used for determining compliance was the 16th month instead of the 15th month, one month past the expected 15 of 22 months. The LAB suggested there is a better way to calculate this standard, and as result the BMCW has adjusted its methodology for calculating this standard. In this report, the BMCW has calculated this measure using the method recommended by the Legislative Audit Bureau.

- The Settlement requires that 30% of adoptions finalized occur within 24 months of the child's removal from home and entry into OHC. The BMCW's performance of

21.7% did not meet the performance expectation, but showed improvement when compared to Period 1 with a performance level of 14.2%, and Period 2 with a performance level of 15.5%.

SAFETY

- ❑ The Settlement tracks the percentage of children in BMCW custody who are victims of substantiated abuse or neglect by a foster parent or staff of a facility required to be licensed, establishing a threshold of (0.60%) for Period 3. BMCW was over the threshold limit with (0.81%).

WELL BEING

- Placement Stability – At least 90% percent of children in out-of-home care within the period shall have had three or fewer placements after January 1, 1999, during their current placement episode. The number of placements will exclude time-limited respite care placements and returns to the same caretaker after an intervening placement during the same out-of-care episode. Those children in BMCW custody through the Wraparound Milwaukee program shall be excluded from this calculation. The BMCW achieved 72%, and did not meet this performance standard.

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare will implement a corrective action plan in 2006 to address the four Settlement Agreement provisions where compliance was not achieved during Period 3.

A corrective action plan was implemented in 2005 to address the Settlement Agreement provisions where compliance was not achieved during Period 2. The brief results relating to selected items of the 2004 (Period 2) corrective action plan were:

- **§I.B.4 Length of Stay:** The YTD Length of Stay performance goal was achieved by BMCW during Period 3.
- **§I.B.7 Adoption:** Although there was an increase (6.2%) in the percentage of children adopted within 24 months between Period 2 and Period 3, the BMCW did not achieve the performance goal in Period 3.
- **§I.D.9 Placement Stability:** The BMCW did not meet the Period 3 performance goals during Period 3.
- **§I.B.6 Reunification within 12 months of entry into out-of-home care:** The BMCW achieved 72% compared to the requirement that at least 71% or more of reunifications shall occur within 12 months of entry into out-of-home care. For Period 3, the BMCW met the YTD performance standard of 71%.
- **§I.C.1 Substantiated maltreatment of children in out-of-home care:** The BMCW achieved 0.81% compared to the requirement that no more than 0.60 % of children in BMCW custody shall be the victims of substantiated abuse or neglect allegations by a foster parent or staff of a facility required to be licensed. The BMCW believes that even one child who is the victim of a substantiated allegation is one too many. During Period 1, 32 unique children were victims of a

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

substantiated allegation; this increased to 38 children during Period 2, and slightly decreased to 35 children in Period 3.

Category 3 - Settlement sections for monitoring purposes:

The outcomes in the final section of the summary do not have an identified performance expectation standard indicated in the settlement. The BMCW goal is to achieve 100%.

PERMANENCY

- The settlement tracks to ensure that all children's (1) initial permanency plans are completed within 60 days of entry into OHC and (2) that all children have a current Judicial Permanency Plan Review or Permanency Plan Review. The BMCW achieved 98% for item 1 and 92% for item 2.
- The BMCW is also required to monitor "re-entry" of children previously in OHC within 12 months of exiting OHC. Of the 1,179 children who entered OHC between January and December 2005, 83 of the 153 children who re-entered care, or 54%, re-entered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode. During Period 3 the Re-Entry rate for children who re-entered within 12 or fewer months was 7%.

WELL BEING

- The BMCW also tracks (1) the timeframe for completion of family assessments (must be completed within 90 days), and (2) the distribution of Placement Packet information to Foster Parents. The BMCW met 95% for completion of Family Assessments, and 97% for distribution of the Placement Packets.
- The average number of children per Ongoing Case Manager is also monitored, but there is no standard. Although this is by Ongoing Site, the estimated BMCW average is 17 children per Case Manager.
 - Also monitored are (1) children's Initial Health Checks (CPC) within 5 business days of first placement as recorded in eWiSACWIS, and (2) children with an up-to-date physical and dental exam recorded in eWiSACWIS. Estimated YTD performance for CPC health checks during Period 3 was 67%, annual medical exams was 73%, and dental exams was 64%.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- Turnover - Overall, the BMCW experienced a turnover rate of Ongoing Case Manager staff in excess of 33% during Period 3 (CY 2005). Continued efforts to further explore the turnover issue and how to address improving staff retention remain in the forefront of issues the BMCW is working on during CY 2006. It is an important area of focus in the Governor's Kids First agenda.

The table on the following page provides actual performance data for Period 3 (CY 2005) and Period 1 (CY 2003), what the standards were for Period 2 and Period 1, and what the standards and performance were in Period 3 (CY 2005).

Settlement Agreement at a Glance

BMCW Settlement Agreement at a Glance Period 3 (January - December 2005)

Agreement Section	Period 1 Performance Standards	Period 1 Result	Period 2 Performance Standards	Period 2 Result	Period 3 Performance Standards	Jan - June Period 3	July - Dec Period 3	Period 3 Result
I.B.2 ASFA (children TPR filed by 15th of 22nd month)**	>= 65.0%	76.8%	>= 75%	88.2%	>= 90.0%	29%	29%	29%
I.B.3 ASFA (children who were not in compliance with timely TPR filing)	>= 75.0%	88.1%	>= 85%	92.9%	>= 90.0%	59%	92%	92%
I.B.4 LOS (children in out-of-home care greater than 24 months- as measured against the baseline of 5,533)	<= 40.0%	44.2%	<= 35%	30.2%	<= 25.0%	26%	21%	23%
I.B.6 - Reunification (less than 12 months after entry into out-of-home care)	Monitor Only	45.0%	>= 65%	63.0%	>= 71.0%	69%	75%	72%
I.B.7 - Adoptions (within 24 months of entry into out-of-home care)	>= 20.0%	14.2%	>= 25%	15.5%	>= 30.0%	21%	23.5%	21.7%
I.C.1 – Maltreatment-Children in OHC w/substantiated allegation by FP or agency staff	<= 0.70%	0.57%	<= 0.65%	0.79%	<= 0.60%	0.36%	0.81%	0.81%
I.C.2 – Referrals to independent investigative agency within 3 business days	>= 80.0%	99.8%	>= 85%	99.4%	>= 90.0%	99%	99%	99%
I.C.3 - Upon receipt of referral, assigned to an investigator within 3 business days	>= 80.0%	99.6%	>= 85%	99.8%	>= 90.0%	100%	99%	99%
I.C.4 - Determination of independent Investigation w/l 60 days	>= 80.0%	97.6%	>= 85%	98.1%	>= 90.0%	100%	99%	99%
I.D.2 - Family caseloads (not to exceed 11 /OCM)	<= 13.0	9.6	<= 11	10.0	<= 11.0	10**	9**	10**
I.D.3 - Monthly face-to-face contact	>= 90.0%	90.0%	>= 90%	97.0%	>= 90.0%	97%	97%	97%
I.D.5 - I.D.7 Placement Stabilization/Assessment Centers - Shelter Phase Out	Phase out by end of period 1			Completed by 1-1-04 See report for details				
I.D.8 - Foster parent reimbursement rates	Please see report for details							
I.D.9 - Placement stability – children with 3 or fewer placements	>= 80.0%	75.9%	>= 82%	72.1%	>= 90.0%	71%	72%	72%
II - Named Plaintiffs	Please see report for details							
III – Monitoring								
III.C.1 - Family assessments completed w/i 90 days	*	96.4%	*	97.3%	*	95%	95%	95%
III.C.2 - Initial health screens – w/i 5 business days	*	58.2%	*	76.4%	*	59%	77%	67%
III.C.3 - Placement packets	*	91.0%	*	85%	*	96%	98%	97%
III.C.4 - Annual medical exam	*	75.4%	*	74.3%	*	69%	73%	73%
III.C.4 - Annual dental exam	*	57.4%	*	64.8%	*	63%	64%	64%
III.C.5 - Initial Permanency Plans-w/i 60 days	*	97.0%	*	97.0%	*	99%	98%	98%
III.C.6 - Annual Permanency Plan Reviews		77.3%	*	77.1%	*	91%	93%	92%
III.C.7 - Re-Entry within 12 months of exit		9.0%	*	6.7%	*	5.7%	8.4%	7.0%
III.C.8 - BMCW Turnover	*	30.1%	*	38.6%	*	20%	20%	33%
III.C.9 – Average children per OCM caseload	*	19.5	*	18.5	*	18	17	17

* The method of measuring §I.B.2 (children reaching the ASFA compliance timeline) for Period 3 differs from the method used to calculate the measure for Periods 1 and 2.

Please refer to the *Introduction* and the actual section in the report for §I.B.2 for additional details.

** This is the BMCW average. Please refer to the report for Site detail.

VI. Other Required Plan Information

This section includes Juvenile Justice Transfer information and Foster and Adoptive Parents Recruitment progress, accomplishments, and future plans.

Juvenile Justice Transfers

The CAPTA Amendments of 2003 require states, to the extent possible, to collect information on children under the care of child protective services (CPS) agencies who are transferred to the custody of juvenile justice agencies. In Wisconsin, county human service departments and BMCW operate the CPS program. County human service departments also typically operate community-based juvenile justice programs, although some juvenile justice programs are attached to courts. In most counties, child welfare workers carry a mix of CPS and juvenile justice cases. The Department of Corrections operates juvenile correctional facilities and aftercare programs for juvenile offenders.

Children under the care of the CPS agency would be subject to a protective services CHIPS order (under Chapter 48, the Children's Code). There are two types of juvenile justice dispositions (under Chapter 938, the Juvenile Justice Code) that could result in placement. Children can be adjudicated delinquent or determined to be a juvenile in need of protection or services (JIPS). Children can be subject to dual CHIPS and delinquent orders. JIPS orders are used for status offenders (truants, runaways, etc.) and uncontrollable youth.

The potential for children to be transferred from the CPS system into custody (i.e. a court ordered placement) under the juvenile justice program could occur in two ways. First, a child originally subject to a CHIPS order could be subsequently adjudicated delinquent. The delinquency could result in short term detention or shelter stays or longer stays in licensed out-of-home care. In some instances, the child may be dropped from the CHIPS order and thus responsibility for placement would be under the delinquency order. But it is as likely that the child would be under dual CHIPS and delinquency orders. Thus at the county level, it is rare for a child to be "transferred" from CPS to juvenile justice. Second, for children convicted of certain offenses, custody of the child is given to the Department of Corrections for placement in a juvenile correctional facility. For these cases, a "transfer" does occur.

The eWiSACWIS system is used to track all placements of children in out-of-home care subject to federal IV-E permanency planning requirements. For children initially placed in out-of-home care for CPS reasons who are subsequently adjudicated delinquent or a juvenile in need of protection or services (under Chapter 938, the Juvenile Justice Code), the legal status window in eWiSACWIS can be used to record the change in legal status. However, counties are required to use the legal status window only for CPS cases and use of the window for juvenile justice cases is optional. Since DHFS does not manage the Wisconsin juvenile justice program, counties cannot be required to use eWiSACWIS to track all juvenile justice activity. Thus it may not be possible to identify all changes in legal status from child protective services to juvenile justice.

Most of the children transferred to the Department of Corrections have patterns of delinquency and juvenile justice-related placements at the county level before going to juvenile correctional facilities. It would be rare for a child to go from a CHIPS order to juvenile corrections; it is more likely that it would only happen with children who commit serious offenses.

As stated above, Wisconsin counties are required to use the eWiSACWIS system to record all activity for child protective services cases, but are only required to use eWiSACWIS only to record out-of-home placements for juvenile justice cases. Counties are given the option to use eWiSACWIS for more of their juvenile justice cases, but utilization varied widely among counties. Milwaukee County, the largest county in the state, does not use eWiSACWIS for any juvenile justice activity.

Within the two scenarios in which custody of a child could be transferred from child protection to juvenile justice, in instances where the legal responsibility for placement changes from a CHIPS order to a delinquency order, DCFS is not able to reliably use data from the eWiSACWIS legal window to determine when the transfer of legal responsibility/custody occurred. In instances where youth are sentenced to juvenile correction facilities, the juvenile correctional placement is recorded in the Department of Corrections Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS). If the youth went to Juvenile Corrections from an out-of-home placement recorded in eWiSACWIS, it may be possible to determine from the discharge reason in eWiSACWIS that the subsequent placement was in juvenile corrections. However past experience shows that only about 20% of juvenile correctional placements were in a IV-E related out-of-home placements at the time they were admitted to juvenile corrections and the prior placement for those youth was almost always under a delinquency order, so an estimate of actual JJ transfers in Wisconsin is not possible.

DCFS cannot provide specific data on the number of children transferred to juvenile justice at this time. Wisconsin will continue to study the potential to collect this information. However, the ability to gather more specific data is limited, affected by the fact that DCFS does not manage the juvenile justice program at the state level. To develop strategies to collect data for this CAPTA requirement, DCFS will request technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Welfare Data and Technology.

Diligent Recruitment

Wisconsin is committed to recruiting foster and adoptive parents that reflect the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of the children in out-of-home care. In Wisconsin, more than 85% of public child welfare adoptions are foster home conversions. Based on this information more attention is being given to assisting counties to recruit foster/adopt resources. State Permanency Consultants work with counties to identify children needing targeted recruitment efforts so that these children can also move to permanence in a more

timely fashion. To help facilitate the timely movement of children to permanence the State is looking to implement the Structure Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) format so that the completion of an adoptive home study is not a barrier to a timely adoption. State staff will use this study format and counties will have the option to participate and use the study.

Based upon feedback from foster care coordinators, DCFS required the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center to develop a statewide, ongoing, and consistent recruitment campaign complete with a requirement to provide technical assistance to agencies or consortiums of agencies in the development of recruitment resources specific to their regional or localized needs.

Lutheran Social Services – First Choice for Children and Children’s Service Society of Wisconsin, partner agencies with the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, conducted various recruitment activities in 2005 in the Milwaukee area to expand their pool of foster and adoptive families. Specifically, over the past year and a half, First Choice for Children (FCFC) made a commitment to distribute information about the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center to individuals who may attend events where FCFS is recruiting foster parents but live outside of Milwaukee County. In addition, this spring, FCFC developed a radio recruitment spot in partnership with other agencies in the Southeastern Region.

Wisconsin has found word-of-mouth to be one of our greatest recruitment tools because of the high foster care conversion rate. With so many families moving from foster care to adoption to provide permanent homes for children, counties have experienced a depletion of resources. As a result, our future recruitment efforts will be for foster parents with more emphasis on training and preparation of these resources for the challenges they will encounter, knowing that many foster parents will consider adopting children in their care if that becomes their permanence goal.

Accordingly, more emphasis is placed on local recruitment activities to reach families that can meet the needs of the children in care. Special emphasis is being placed on targeted recruitment. DCFS is currently working with AdoptUsKids as a pilot state to address recruitment needs. DCFS will be doing benchmarking initially in the areas of Indian family recruitment and recruitment of families willing to accept sibling groups of 3 or more children and may move into other targeted ethnic areas of need. AdoptUsKids has been in Wisconsin two days already in 2005 and DCFS plans to have them back for several more days of technical assistance.

In September 2006, DCFS and the Foster Care Adoption Resource Center worked with AdoptUsKids to have Lorrie Lutz present about best practices for foster family recruitment at a Recruitment Summit before the annual statewide Foster Care Coordinators Conference. Some of the issues addressed at the Summit included: using existing foster parents as recruitment resources, using data to track and support effective recruitment activities, and supporting foster parents to increase the retention of existing resources. The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center also plans to hold a Retention

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Summit in 2007, ideally with another national presenter coordinated through AdoptUsKids.

While foster and adoptive parent recruitment was not identified as an area needing improvement in the CFSR, DCFS believes it is an area where Wisconsin can do better.

Wisconsin Statewide Recruitment Goals

In collaboration with counties and tribes, the DCFS will work to develop a pool of waiting families to meet the diverse needs of children in out-of-home care (OHC). Specific strategies that will be used include the following:

1. Develop a consistent recruitment campaign with materials that can be used by local agencies to build on the recognition gained from the statewide activities.
2. Continue to improve use of recruitment and retention data to enable agencies to make program improvement decisions based upon current and accurate data concerning family recruitment and retention.
3. Provide State Permanency Consultants (SPC's) to work with counties, tribes, and private agencies to facilitate timely, quality permanence for children..
4. Collaborate with counties, tribes, and private agencies to develop policies and procedures to increase the identification of relatives as placement resources.
5. Provide support and training to counties, tribes and private agencies to improve the community and cultural responsiveness of their recruitment and retention activities, including access to services (e.g., Medical Assistance)
6. Implement a dual licensing process (SAFE) to help facilitate quality, timely permanence by having studied and approved foster/adopt families as resources for children in need of permanence.

Recruitment Activities

Over the past year, DCFS have worked with AdoptUsKids on sibling and native recruitment. Focus groups were conducted to identify both county and state level challenges to recruitment. Recruitment activities are included among the responsibilities of the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center (FCARC). Doing joint foster/adoptive parent recruitment is appropriate in that over 85% of public child welfare adoptions completed in Wisconsin are foster home conversions. In addition, DCFS is involved in a federal grant with the Professional Association of Treatment Homes (PATH) called REACH that is focused on Native American family recruitment.

VII. Child Welfare Demonstration Projects

Wisconsin has one Title IV-E Demonstration project, the Subsidized Guardianship Program.

The Subsidized Guardianship Program is part of a comprehensive Guardianship Permanency Initiative to improve permanency outcomes for children in out-of-home care by promoting the use of permanent legal guardianship as a permanency option. While guardianship has long existed as a permanency outcome for children, the lack of ongoing payments to guardians to care for children once permanency has been achieved has limited the effectiveness of guardianship as a permanency outcome and results in foster care cases remaining open longer than necessary to continue payments to the caretakers.

The IV-E waiver allows Wisconsin to operate the Subsidized Guardianship program to provide ongoing payments to persons becoming legal guardians of children in foster care, similar to the adoption assistance program for children who are adopted. The target population for the Subsidized Guardianship program is children placed with relatives licensed as foster parents. The subsidized guardianship program will make guardianship more feasible as a permanency outcome and improve the permanency options available for children placed with relatives.

The Guardianship Permanency Initiative is based on the following principles:

- Improving permanency outcomes for children and families through more effective permanency planning that is family-focused.
- Promoting the use of relatives as foster care placement resources.
- Ensuring the safety and well being of children through permanent placements with caring adults who will raise the children to adulthood.
- Providing services to families in ways that address the needs of children but minimizes the public child welfare involvement in the lives of families.
- Operating the subsidized guardianship program in a manner similar to the adoption assistance program.

The Wisconsin waiver request was initially submitted in September 2002 and resubmitted in January 2004. The federal waiver request was approved in September 2004. State enabling legislation to clarify the use of guardianship as a permanency option and establish the subsidized guardianship payment program was approved as part of the Governor's 2005-2007 state budget bill, 2005 Wis. Act 25. Initial implementation of the Subsidized Guardianship program began in October 2005. The Subsidized Guardianship program can be operated for five years under the federal waiver. The DHFS can request a renewal of the waiver upon completion of the five years.

The subsidized guardianship program has been implemented initially in Milwaukee County by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. Approximately 185 children in foster care had a guardianship order in place in the Fall of 2005 and the families were given the opportunity to convert to subsidized guardianship. A total of 137 children were referred to the court for dismissal of a CHIPS order and their cases were transferred to Subsidized

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Guardianship. The remaining cases were either pursuing adoption, close to turning age 18, or the families wanted to keep the CHIPS order in place for service reasons.

In January 2006, the demonstration portion of the waiver was implemented and 480 children in foster care placed with relatives were assigned to groups for evaluation purposes. These children and others added to the demonstration groups over the 5-year period will be tracked to determine the impact of subsidized guardianship as a permanency option.

The waiver request includes the potential to expand the program to the rest of the state, although no timeframe has been set for expansion. Other counties will have to agree to the terms of the waiver to participate in the program. At the current time, the number of relatives licensed as foster parents is limited outside of Milwaukee, so most counties do not have significant numbers of children in the target population.

As a condition of the federal waiver, the guardianship program must be cost neutral to the federal government and an independent program evaluation including random assignment of cases must be conducted. Target population cases will be assigned to experimental and control groups for evaluation purposes, with only the experimental group being eligible for subsidized guardianship payments. DCFS has selected Westat to complete the evaluation of the Subsidized Guardianship program. ACF approved the submitted evaluation plan in December 2005. Random assignment began in January 2006, with the assignment of 288 children to either the experimental or control groups. It is anticipated that approximately 800 children in Milwaukee will be part of the target population for the program over the 5-year period.

DCFS has submitted three waiver progress reports to the federal Children's Bureau and the Administration for Children and Families Chicago Regional Office. The next progress report will be submitted by July 31, 2006.

Note: Wisconsin's Subsidized Guardianship waiver demonstration does not involve the flexible use of Title IV-E funds. Should the waiver generate waiver savings, those waiver savings funds would be considered flexible IV-E funds. The funding issues addressed in the waiver are limited to use of IV-E funds for subsidized guardianship payments and related program administrative costs and the ability to service youth in Subsidized guardianship with Chafee funds. The demonstration project is currently implemented only in Milwaukee County. Given the unique funding structure of the bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, IV-B funds have not been used for ongoing child welfare services in Milwaukee. As a result, IV-B is excluded from the cost analysis part of the waiver evaluation.

VIII. CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT PLAN

In August 2003, the Wisconsin child protective services program was evaluated by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and was the 43rd state to undergo this Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). As occurred in every state, the ACF reviewed 50 cases in three counties which were intended to represent performance across the state, held focus groups, and evaluated data and a state self-assessment. Like every other state in the nation, Wisconsin was found in substantial non-conformance with many of the outcomes in the CFSR.

The following outcome areas and systemic factors must be addressed in the PEP:

- Safety Outcome 1 - Protection of children from abuse and neglect
- Safety Outcome 2 - Maintain children safely in their homes where appropriate
- Permanency Outcome 1 - Permanence and stability of living situations
- Permanency Outcome 2 - Preserving continuity of family relationships
- Well-Being Outcome 2 - Educational services to children
- Well-Being Outcome 3 - Physical and mental health services
- Case Review System - Written case plans and regular permanency hearings
- Quality Assurance - State program standards and quality assurance activities
- Staff and Provider Training - Training for local agency staff and foster parents
- Service Array - Services available to children and families

The state received its CFSR results in January 2004, and was given 90 days to produce a statewide program improvement plan in response. The Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) was submitted to ACF in April 2004 and was approved effective November 1, 2004. Wisconsin will implement the PEP over the two-year period of November 1, 2004 through October 31, 2006.

The PEP was created through a collaborative process that occurred over a period of seven months, and was guided by an internal planning team consisting of the DCFS Administrator, Bureau and Office Directors, and a Facilitator/Coordinator. The internal planning team recruited a PEP Core Team of more than sixty (60) child welfare experts, including representatives of counties, tribes, advocates, and other stakeholders, to develop improvement strategies for the PEP. In order to allow sufficient time to develop a plan that had buy-in throughout the state, it was necessary to begin this process before Wisconsin received the results of the review in January 2004.

The Core Team began by identifying the underlying conditions in families, communities, child welfare agencies, and state government that impact Wisconsin's child welfare operations and performance. The Core Team identified overarching strategies for program improvement and developed and prioritized specific action steps to improve CFSR outcomes within the two-year timeframe. The work of the PEP Team was instrumental in reaching agreement on the overarching strategies that form the basis for the state objectives for 2005-2009 described in Section IV of this plan.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

The Core Team selected the final PEP action steps by applying three strategic criteria. Action steps must be: 1) perceived by the Core Team as effective in addressing the very specific findings of the CFSR; 2) substantially achievable within two years; and 3) practicable within the constraints of the current fiscal environment and the authority of child welfare agencies. These action steps are included in the 2005-2009 plan.

The full PEP, including the "PEP matrix" which identifies the specific action steps and PEP quarterly progress reports, is available at:

<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/cfsr/PEP.htm>

Status of PEP Implementation

To implement the PEP, DCFS formed the PEP Implementation Team consisting of members from the former Child Welfare executive Steering Committee and the PEP Core team. The Implementation Team was created as a collaborative, cross-systems approach that will guide planning and implementation of child welfare practice and policy in order to achieve the federal performance outcomes and enhance services to Wisconsin's children and families. The Implementation Team is comprised of over 80 individuals representing a wide array of diverse fields, including domestic abuse, schools, law enforcement, juvenile justice, state courts, mental health, substance abuse, and child protective services. In addition, the Implementation Team has representation from foster and adoptive parents, tribes, and state legislators. The first meeting of the Implementation Team occurred on November 29, 2004 and the Implementation Team has met quarterly during the two-year PEP period.

In addition to the full PEP Implementation Team, the Division of Children and Family Services created the following PEP committees to help shape the policies, procedures, and practices needed to complete the 20 Action Steps identified in the Wisconsin PEP. The PEP Implementation Team will meet on a quarterly basis and each committee will meet at least monthly. The following are the PEP Committees and their responsibilities:

- *PEP Executive Committee*
The Executive Committee of the full PEP Implementation Team will meet between the PEP Implementation Team meetings to assist DCFS in creating long term goals and strategies for the PEP Implementation Team, including the development of the agendas for the quarterly meetings.
- *Child Welfare Case Process*
The Child Welfare Case Process Committee will clarify and develop policies and guidelines for standards of practice related to Access/Intake, Initial Assessment, and Ongoing Services. In addition, this Committee will address issues related to domestic violence and other child welfare associated programs and system.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- *Out-of-Home Care*
The Out-of-Home Care Committee will enhance policies, practices, and procedures related to out-of-home placement, Title IV-E, Permanency Planning, Independent Living, Kinship Care, and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC).
- *Adoption Services*
The Adoption Services Committee will develop and update policies, practices, and procedures related to Concurrent Permanency Planning, Termination of Parental Rights (TPR), Adoption, Adoption Search, and Adoption Assistance payments.
- *Continuous Quality Improvement*
The Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee will design and begin the implementation of a case review model and identify the management and program information needs/reports of the counties and the tribes.

In addition, when issues arise that involve tribal child welfare or training for child welfare staff and providers, the existing Indian Child Welfare Group and Child Welfare Training Council will be consulted for expertise and guidance.

National Performance Standards

The CFSR process includes analyses of statewide data as reported for NCANDS and AFCARS purposes on six safety and permanency measures. For the Wisconsin CFSR review, the state was determined to be in non-conformance with five of the six measures. The PEP action steps, while targeted at specific aspects of performance, are also designed to improve statewide performance on the national standards. The final approved PEP included specific improvement targets for the five measures.

The following table shows state performance on the national performance standards for FFY 2005. For the permanency items, the data is from the AFCARS foster care file. For the safety items, the data is from state sources approved by the Administration for Children and Families Chicago Regional Office and the Children's Bureau.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Table 1 - Wisconsin Achievement of National Performance Standards for 2005

Performance Standards	National Standard (Percent)	WI Data 2002 (Percent)	WI Data 2003 (Percent)	WI Data 2004 (Percent)	WI Data 2005 (Percent)	Minimum Improvement Target (Percent)
Safety Outcome 1 – Recurrence of Maltreatment Of all children who were victims of substantiated maltreatment reports, what percent were victims of another substantiated report within a 6-month period?	6.1 or less	6.04	7.13	5.25	4.97	6.23
Safety Outcome 2 – Maltreatment While in Care Of all children in out-of-home care, what percent experienced maltreatment by foster parents or facility staff members?	0.57 or less	0.26	0.30	0.57	0.62	Standard Met (2003 data)
Permanency Outcome 1 – Re-entry to Care Of all children who entered out-of-home care, what percent re-entered care within 12 months of a prior out-of-home care episode?	8.6 or less	22.2	21.5	18.9	22.4	20.15
Permanency Outcome 2 – Timely Reunification Of all children reunified from out-of-home care, what percent were reunified within 12 months of entry into out-of-home care?	76.2 or more	66.5	65.2	70.1	77.8	67.62
Permanency Outcome 3 – Timely Adoption Of all children adopted from out-of-home care, what percent were adopted within 24 months of their entry into care?	32.0 or more	17.5	17.8	21.7	30.1*	20.7
Permanency Outcome 4 – Placement Stability Of all children in out-of-home care for less than 12 months, what percent experienced no more than 2 placement settings?	86.7 or more	92.3	92.6	90.5	89.8	Standard Met (2003 data)

Data Sources: -- Safety Outcomes- 2002 - 2003 data is based on estimates derived from alternate methodology approved by the federal Children's Bureau; the 2004 & 2005 figures are derived solely from the eWiSACWIS Maltreatment Recurrence and Maltreatment in Out of Home Care Outcome reports.

-- Permanency Outcomes- 2002 - 2005 data are based on data profile figures generated by the federal Children's Bureau using the state's FFY AFCARS submissions

* Time to Adoption Data from the federal State Data Profile includes adoptions with incorrect removal dates; efforts to correct removal dates will be completed by Fall 2006

IX. CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM SYSTEMIC FACTORS

This section of the Child and Family Services Plan addresses the seven systemic factors that are examined in the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) of state child welfare programs. The systemic factors relate to the infrastructure of the child welfare service system that supports the delivery of effective services to children and families. This section of the plan also covers research and evaluation activities.

The results of the 2003 Wisconsin CFSR identified information system capacity, responsiveness to the community, and foster and adoptive parent recruitment as strengths. The results identified case review system, quality assurance, training, and service array as areas needing improvements. Specific action steps to address the CFSR results are included in the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP), approved effective November 1, 2004.

A. Information System Capacity

Wisconsin completed implementation in 2004 of a comprehensive Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System, currently called eWiSACWIS, which is used by all county child welfare agencies, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), and the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP). The eWiSACWIS project began development in March 1999 with a donor SACWIS system transferred from New Mexico. The DHFS contracted with American Management Systems, Inc. (AMS) to fully implement the eWiSACWIS and roll the system out to all counties statewide.

The eWiSACWIS system was implemented in phases and the last group of counties implemented the system in June, 2004, at which point eWiSACWIS became fully operational statewide.

- **Phase 1** involved implementation of the system in 2000 by BMCW and SNAP. Phase 1 was completed in December 2000.
- **Phase 2** involved statewide expansion and began in 2001. Counties implemented the system starting in October 2001 generally in groups of 10 to 12 counties every four months for the statewide rollout. The last group of 14 counties implemented the system in June 2004.
- **Phase 3** started in 2002 and involves converting the original WiSACWIS system from a traditional client server-based application to Internet Web technology to reduce operational support and maintenance costs. The conversion to “eWiSACWIS” was completed in December 2003. Counties that went on the system in 2004 implemented the new Internet version.

With the statewide implementation completed, Wisconsin has begun the process to obtain federal certification of the eWiSACWIS system as meeting all SACWIS requirements. The initial federal certification review took place in September 2004 and the DCFS response to the preliminary SACWIS Assessment Report (SAR) was submitted in March 2006. Based on the experience of other states, obtaining final federal certification will likely be a multi-year process. DCFS is currently working with the ACF Systems Unit to address issues in the SAR. Major issues that will require attention for SACWIS certification are interfaces with other systems and further automation of IV-E eligibility.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

eWiSACWIS is designed to provide statewide data on child abuse and neglect investigations for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and statewide data on children in the out-of-home care and adoption programs for Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) reporting purposes. During the transition period, as counties came up on eWiSACWIS, state data came from a combination of eWiSACWIS and legacy systems. The legacy systems include the Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) data system for child abuse and neglect reports and the Human Services Reporting System (HSRS) for information on children in foster care, payments to foster care providers, and adoptions, and the Kinship Care Data Tracking System for information on children receiving Kinship care payments.

For NCANDS reporting, Wisconsin submitted its first NCANDS Child and Agency files in March 2006 for the FFY 2005 period. Previously, the state CAN system was used to submit summary state data for the NCANDS Summary Data Component (SDC) format. eWiSACWIS data was loaded into the CAN system to produce the SDC report. Development to provide additional NCANDS information was completed in 2004 with the creation of the Child File for submitting case-specific data along with the Agency File. Testing for this was conducted during 2005. DCFS will continue to work with the NCANDS federal technical team to provide additional information in the NCANDS files.

For AFCARS Foster Care reporting, information is currently generated from eWiSACWIS using placement records for children in out-of-home care. During the period that eWiSACWIS was being rolled out statewide, Wisconsin submitted a “blended” foster care file using eWiSACWIS data for counties that implemented the system and legacy HSRS Child Substitute Care (CSC) module information for counties using the legacy system. As counties have implemented eWiSACWIS, the eWiSACWIS share of the blended AFCARS foster file has grown as use of the HSRS CSC module was phased out. The last blended file was the FFY 2004, which covered October 2003 through March 2004. For blended files, random sequence numbers were used for the case records. The 2004 B file covering April 2004 through September 2004 was drawn 100% from eWiSACWIS and included the last group of counties that converted in June 2004. DCFS began use of encrypted case numbers in the FFY 2004 B file, which will improve federal capacity to match AFCARS files from different time periods.

For adoption AFCARS reporting, information is currently generated from eWiSACWIS using placement and adoption records for children who are adopted. Historically, the HSRS system Adoption Module was used to submit state adoption data. The eWiSACWIS AFCARS adoption file was completed in December 2004 and the first eWiSACWIS submission was the FFY 2005A file covering October 2004 through March 2005.

Under the Chafee Act, states are required to collect outcome information for youth who age out of the out-of-home care system. Wisconsin is waiting on federal direction on the specific outcome measures before building data collection mechanisms. It is anticipated that the Chafee outcome data collection will be implemented through enhancements to the eWiSACWIS system.

Under the CAPTA, states are to provide information to the extent possible on a number of data elements. The submission of the NCANDS Child and Agency files beginning with FFY 2005 will improve the ability of Wisconsin to provide data for CAPTA purposes.

B. Research and Evaluation

The DCFS publishes several types of child welfare statistical reports. The DCFS publishes an annual report on child abuse and neglect (CAN) statistics for the state, including the number and type of maltreatment reports and the disposition of those reports. The DCFS produces periodic out-of-home care (OHC) caseload reports using eWiSACWIS data and legacy HSRS data. Comprehensive analytical reports using out-of-home care information are also produced on a periodic basis. The last OOH report analyzing data through 1999 was published in October 2001. A similar OHC report covering CY 2005 including OHC data for all counties from eWiSACWIS is currently under development.

The BMCW has a Program Evaluation and Management (PEM) unit that produces monthly data reports on child welfare services in Milwaukee. These monthly data reports are shared widely within the Milwaukee community. On a semi-annual basis, a comprehensive report on BMCW achievement of lawsuit settlement performance objectives is produced and shared with the Milwaukee community.

Within DCFS, the Office of Program Evaluation and Planning (OPEP) leads efforts to develop data sources and analyze program outcomes to improve the quality of child welfare services in the state. The OPEP develops program outcome reports for counties using eWiSACWIS, CAN, HSRS, and other data patterned after the federal child welfare outcomes report. Additional reports for county use will be produced as part of the quality assurance initiative.

The DCFS contracted with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the University of Chicago-Chapin Hall to conduct a third party evaluation of child welfare services provided by the BMCW in Milwaukee County. The evaluation includes both in-home and out-of-home care services. The project has produced reports on in-home safety services in 2003 and recent entries to out-of-home care in 2004. A third report on another group of children who have been in out-of-home care for an extended period was completed in 2005.

DCFS also contracts with the University of Chicago-Chapin Hall to participate in a 3-state study with Illinois and Iowa to evaluate Independent Living outcomes for youth who aged out of out-of-home care. Outcome areas under examination include employment, education, housing, and other life skills that improve a child's transition to adulthood, i.e., parenting, substance abuse, victimization, etc. The study will also compile information regarding services and supports the youths received. Cases were selected for the evaluation starting in April 2002 and the first wave of interviews with youth was completed in 2003. An interim report on the first wave of interviews was completed. The second wave of interviews with the sampled youth was completed in 2004. The final wave of interviews will be conducted in 2006 prior to the youth turning 21. Wisconsin anticipates using the study results to meet expected federal Chafee program reporting requirements on a sample basis until federal requirements have been finalized and a more complete data collection mechanisms is developed.

DCFS also currently contracts with Westat to conduct an evaluation of the Subsidized Guardianship program being operated under a Title IV-E waiver. The evaluation will determine the impact of Subsidized Guardianship on permanency for children placed with relatives. The

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

evaluation covers the 5-year waiver period that started in October 2005. The evaluation plan was approved by ACF in December 2005 and the evaluation is currently underway. Random assignment for the evaluation began in January 2006.

C. Case Review System

Wisconsin has a comprehensive judicial and administrative panel review system in place to review the permanency plans for children in out-of-home care and to ensure compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). Most counties use administrative panels for the six month reviews and 12 months hearings are conducted by the court.

Key aspects of child welfare case planning and review include the following factors:

- Development and implementation of service and progress evaluation plans with families and key collateral contacts with the family system; and,
- Use of the case and permanency plans and results of subsequent progress evaluations as bases for conducting permanency plan reviews, assessing ASFA requirements, and modifying the permanence goal, as necessary, including the development of a concurrent permanence goal.

Practice responsibilities and relevant parties associated with the above factors are governed by a variety of policy directives, including state statutes, administrative rules, program policies (i.e., Numbered Memos), standards, guidelines, and operating procedures. Current state statutes governing child welfare and juvenile justice intervention address permanency plan review requirements, timeframes, plan content, and notice procedures, including notice to out-of-home care providers, and are consistent with expectations prescribed under ASFA.

The issuance of the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* in May 2002 provided a uniform system to assure that all county child welfare caseworkers conduct timely family assessments, develop case plans, and conduct case reviews for all children and families who enter the system. Coupled with the previously issued *CPS Investigation Standards*, the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* are designed to cover the life of a case from the time that a child abuse or neglect report is received through the closing of the ongoing services case.

The DCFS has implemented several approaches to informing, clarifying, and monitoring permanency planning review requirements and assessing ongoing ASFA compliance. These approaches include development or modification and implementation of standards and guidelines for practice and operating procedures, provision of training and technical assistance, and ongoing monitoring and program improvement responsibilities.

During the 2005-06 Wisconsin legislative session DCFS drafted legislation to further clarify ASFA requirements previously codified into Wisconsin statutes. However, the legislation did not advance. DCFS will again seek consideration of those changes in the 2007-08 legislative session.

Modification of Administrative Rules, Standards, Policies, and Operating Procedures

The ability to comply with ASFA requirements not only requires tracking the length of a child's placement in out-of-home care, but also implementing practice standards and guidelines, policies, and procedures, and program coordination which support effective child welfare intervention. Such efforts focus on successfully engaging the child and his or her family, involving them in the development of a unique and responsive case plan, and evaluating progress in a thorough and regular manner, involving the family, providers, and key collateral contacts in this process.

Finally, DCFS continues to work with representatives of the Director of State Courts Office, the Milwaukee County Children's Court, and other key legal stakeholders in supporting continued cross-system coordination in the state's permanency planning review responsibilities and compliance with the ASFA. Efforts have focused on the identification and development of strategies to address the availability of resources within and philosophical differences among members of Wisconsin's county judiciary regarding the implementation of the ASFA requirements.

CFSR Improvement Strategies

The 2003 CFSR for Wisconsin found that six and 12 month reviews are conducted on a timely basis. The major issues identified in the CFSR include the participation of the family in the case review process, delays in the termination of parental rights (TPR), and participation of foster parents in review hearings.

During the 2005-06 Wisconsin legislative session, Senate Bill 378 was introduced, which would have eliminated jury trials in TPR actions. The bill received a public hearing in the Wisconsin Senate Committee on Health, Children, Families, Aging and Long Term Care, but no further action was taken.

In addition, 2005 Wisconsin Act 293 made a number of changes to grounds for TPR actions, as well as changes to procedures at both the trial court and appeals court level which will improve the TPR process in Wisconsin.

DCFS is currently working with the Director of State Courts Office (DSCO) to include reviews of court case files by DSCO staff as part of the Continuous Quality Improvement reviews of county child welfare programs. The combined reviews began in June 2005 at La Crosse County. Since then the following counties have had combined reviews: Pierce (September 2005), Washington (September 2005), Rock (November 2005), Waukesha (December 2005), Iowa (January 2006), St. Croix (February 2006), Dane (March 2006), and Sheboygan (April 2006).

The concurrent review of court files with the child welfare case reviews allows DCFS and DSCO to provide feedback to both the courts and child welfare agency on how to improve the case review process. The site leaders of the respective reviews meet within two weeks of the review to share, discuss, and agree on their findings for inclusion in their respective reports.

D. Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance Staffing

Several program units throughout the DCFS and the DHFS carry out quality assurance efforts for the child welfare program in both the BMCW and in county agencies across the state. These program units include the following:

- *DCFS Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) unit* – This unit formed in 2005 has responsibility for conducting child welfare case reviews in counties using a case review tool similar to the CFSR. The case review results are used for measuring improvement on CFSR item.
- *Department Area Administration Regional Staff* – These staff review local child welfare programs, including monitoring program performance, conducting on-site reviews, and responding to client and public complaints about local program services.
- *BMCW Program Evaluation Managers (PEMs)* – These staff review the program performance of contracted service providers in the BMCW child welfare program, including safety, case management, adoption, and licensing services. The staff monitor agency performance and conduct regular on-site reviews.
- *BPP Adoption Quality Assurance Specialists* – Four staff review the program performance of contracted service providers in the Special Needs Adoption Program, monitor agency performance, and conduct on-site reviews.
- *BPP Child Welfare Policy Section* - These staff provide policy expertise for specific program reviews and program monitoring. In addition, the CPS Case Practice Review Specialist reviews all serious injuries and egregious incidents related to child maltreatment, as well as conducts onsite case reviews in child death cases due to maltreatment, and provides follow-up technical assistance to county agencies.
- *DCFS Office of Program Evaluation and Planning* - The office coordinates the use of program outcome data for program monitoring and contract management purposes.
- *OSF Program Evaluation and Audit Section* – These staff perform in-depth program and fiscal audits of agencies receiving funds from the Department. DCFS uses this unit as needed to ensure accountability of agencies for child welfare funds.

Continuous Quality Improvement System

In response to the August 2003 Federal CFSR, the DCFS developed a program enhancement plan (PEP) that included the design and implementation of a comprehensive statewide Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system. The purpose of the CQI system is to identify strengths and areas needing improvement and then provide needed technical assistance and support to enhance Wisconsin's child welfare program. Formation of the CQI unit in DCFS provided the resources to implement the CQI initiative.

The state hired the Manager of its new CQI system to provide direction, oversight, analysis and program planning for the provision of statewide child welfare services and the child welfare CQI

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

plan. This position supervises the state's CQI Coordinator, as well as direct the work of 5 contracted CQI Specialists, hired under The Management Group (TMG)

The 5 CQI Specialists have undergone a comprehensive training and review of Wisconsin's case practice standards; Children's Code (s.48); CFSR case review protocol and 3 reviews; the CFSR Program Enhancement Plan (PEP); the training Partnership's Core Courses; Safety training, etc;.

Limited Case Reviews were conducted in three counties in 2005 to cumulatively review about 30 cases, which were added to the baseline data from the 50 cases reviewed in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR. The limited case reviews used the CFSR protocol with the CFSR case review instrument and peer reviewers, with the exception that stakeholder interviews were not conducted. In addition, a county case review was conducted using the Quality Service Review (QSR) protocol used by several states.

The Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) unit selected the Quality Service Review (QSR) protocol to perform qualitative reviews of Wisconsin's child welfare systems. Since Wisconsin is a state supervised/county administered child welfare system the QSR was determined to be an ideal approach to provide counties with information about what is working well and where there are opportunities to improve their child welfare system.

In September 2005 the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) issued a Numbered Memo inviting counties to volunteer for a review. Thirty-one counties responded and have been scheduled out through January 2008. By December 2007 DCFS will schedule the other 41 counties for a mutually convenient review, so that all 72 counties are scheduled for a review by 2011.

The CQI/QSR review is done concurrently with the Children's Court Initiative (CCI), which is a review of the child welfare judicial system in a county. The combined reviews began in June 2005 at La Crosse County. Since then the following counties have had combined reviews: Pierce (September 2005), Washington (September 2005), Rock (November 2005), Waukesha (December 2005), Iowa (January 2006), St. Croix (February 2006), Dane (March 2006), and Sheboygan (April 2006).

The DCFS enhanced the post review procedures of their concurrent review of counties with the Director of States Courts Office (DSCO), to exchange, and thus improve the data of their respective reviews, to better inform outcomes for children and families served through their mutual systems. The site leaders of the respective reviews meet within two weeks of the review to share, discuss, and agree on their findings for inclusion in their respective reports.

The PEP and CFSP call for the CQI unit to conduct reviews in 15 or 16 counties per year. The QSR protocol suggests 10 to 12 focus groups and a comprehensive review of 12 family cases is an optimal indicator of the strengths and opportunities for improvement of a county's child welfare system. It requires a team of a minimum of 14 persons to complete a county review of this size.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

After the first 7 reviews it was determined that the team's 5 CQI Specialists needed support from a cadre of trained peer reviewers in order to meet the schedule and avoid burnout. In order to build capacity to accomplish this objective the CQI manager recruited 56 experienced child welfare workers to be trained as QSR case reviewers. Four two-day trainings occurred during the weeks of October 25, 2005 and March 20, 2006. The reviewers agreed to be mentored and coached during two weeklong reviews, or until they could become certified as lead case reviewers.

To date 13 persons have been certified as lead case reviewers. The DCFS has now begun the process of training and certifying the 5 CQI Specialists to also serve as site leaders during a review. Once this is completed the number of reviews the CQI Specialists will need to serve on will be reduced.

Recently the CQI Team has added a review of select eWiSACWIS data reports to its preparatory activities for a CQI review of a county's child welfare system. The intent is to use this data to broaden the scope and depth of information sought during the focus groups.

Adoption Program Quality Assurance

The quality assurance component of the Adoption Program includes four adoption QA specialists who support strategies to improve special needs adoption services, monitor adoption outcomes, and recommend improvements to the adoption program. The QA staff uses various methods, including an annual satisfaction survey and the design of a quality assurance tool to monitor adoption cases assigned to contract partner agencies to determine agency eligibility for a performance payment and to measure outcomes. The QA tool, along with personal and telephone interviews and surveys, is used for on-site reviews of cases.

The adoption QA staff also review cases for compliance with the Adoption Standards of Practice and ASFA. Examples of activities that are analyzed include: methods of handling complaints by foster and adoptive parents; how case plans are developed to meet the permanence needs of the child; preparation of the child for adoption to successfully transition to adopted status; tracking information on children in out-of-home care through the work of the State Permanency Consultants (SPC) in order to help identify resource needs; and training prospective adoptive parents regarding issues with special needs children in order to ensure that parents are knowledgeable of issues affecting adoptive children, thereby reducing the likelihood of a failed adoption.

The QA staff do regular reports on the private agencies, develop the annual adoption report required by statute, provide quality oversight of the Adoption Program, provide or arrange for training, and follow up on eWiSACWIS data entry issues claiming, and develop a monthly newsletter for all adoption staff to ensure continuity of adoption service throughout the state.

Ongoing Monitoring and Program Improvement

The DCFS continues to implement ongoing efforts to assess the quality of child welfare services, to identify what is needed to support service quality, and to develop strategies to respond to those

needs, including the requirements associated with permanency planning reviews and compliance with the ASFA.

As part of its ongoing quality assurance efforts, the DCFS has increased its efforts to support and use the information available from its data sources and developed new data collection tools to better understand the status of child welfare service delivery across the state. As a result of data collection, analysis, and reporting for the BMCW, DCFS has achieved increased capacity to use data for program monitoring. This capacity has increased as a result of the statewide implementation of the eWiSACWIS. County agencies are now provided with reports on program activity on a regular basis and request ad hoc reports as needed.

E. Training and Technical Assistance

Staff Training

Training is provided to local agency staff primarily through Training Partnerships formed by state, county and tribal agencies with several campuses of the University of Wisconsin System. The state is divided into five training partnerships: the Northeastern Wisconsin (NEW) Partnership with the UW-Green Bay; the Western Partnership with UW-River Falls; the Southern Partnership with the UW- Madison; the Milwaukee Partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Inter-tribal Child Welfare Training Partnership with UW-Green Bay. DCFS works with the Training Partnerships to provide a statewide system of training for child welfare workers on the foundations of practice and advanced skills training on specialized topics. All counties, BMCW, SNAP, and most tribes are members of the Training Partnerships. DCFS claims approximately 3.5 million dollars of IV-E for the five training partnerships in Wisconsin.

Training activities are coordinated using a State Training Council that reviews training activities and provides direction to the Training Partnerships. The Training Partnerships have local steering committees with representation from county and tribal child welfare agencies. The Training Partnerships work closely with child welfare managers to encourage counties to have more staff complete the core training. The Training Council created a comprehensive strategic plan for the training system that is being used to guide further development of the Training Partnership system.

The Training Partnerships are involved in supporting counties to provide training to foster parents and prospective adoptive parents using a state-approved competency based curriculum. Foster and adoptive parent training is discussed in detail under the foster and adoptive parent recruitment section of the plan.

Enhancing Staff Training

In the Wisconsin CFSR results, initial staff training, ongoing staff training, and foster/adoptive parent training were cited as areas needing improvement. DCFS remains committed to establishing statewide requirements for initial and ongoing staff training. DCFS has provided funding for the development of a state child welfare training coordinator to help develop and

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

implement training requirements; a state curriculum coordinator to ensure the efficient development of the identified training recommended in the PEP and a distance learning contract to help develop and implement alternative delivery modalities in training.

An ad hoc committee on training requirements developed recommendations on pre service and ongoing training requirements in child welfare. Additional funds have been provided to the Training Partnerships to establish a statewide program of pre-service training for child welfare staff and to expand ongoing training to ensure that all staff receive foundation or Core training and ongoing training.

DCFS will also establish a WiSACWIS training program that will provide ongoing systems training to county, BMCW, and, potentially, tribal users of the system. The WiSACWIS training will be coordinated with the practice and specialized training sessions delivered by the Training Partnerships. In addition, DCFS established a statewide foster care resource center to provide statewide coordination of foster and adoptive parent training.

Training Curriculum

The Wisconsin training curriculum for child welfare staff is a competency-based approach designed to reinforce the basic principles of good case practice and to develop specialized knowledge and skills. A foundation of “Core” courses is offered statewide and all caseworkers are expected to complete the Core. This Core curriculum includes:

- Professionalism in Child Welfare (1 day)
- Effects of Abuse and Neglect (3 days)
- Separation, Placement and Reunification (3 days)
- Legal Aspects of Child Protective Services (2 days)
- Case Assessment and Planning [includes child safety] (4 days)

Also provided are regular offerings of “specialized” training on advanced practice skills and “related” training on topics important to casework provide opportunities for ongoing training. It is anticipated that the number of training days and participants will remain similar to 2005.

These numbers were:

Training Days provided (worker)	649
Number of Core (new worker) training days provided	163
Training Days provided (supervisor/manager)	51
Number of Attendees at training (worker)	6,909
Number of Attendees at training (supervisor/manager)	601

In 2005 a standardized comprehensive pre-service training curriculum was developed to be implemented statewide through the promulgation of an administrative rule in 2006. This Pre-service curriculum includes:

Introduction to Child Welfare
Engaging Families
Safety
Development and Dynamics of Human Behavior
Access

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Court
Initial Assessment
Ongoing Case Management
Permanency

Additionally, a new administrative rule will include mandatory foundation and ongoing training requirements for child protective service workers.

DCFS and the Training Partnerships continue to update the standard training curricula to better educate child welfare staff regarding state and federal program requirements and child welfare practice to instill the competencies needed by staff to support child safety, permanence, and well being. Specialized training on new program initiatives is provided through the Training Partnerships to the extent possible and all training activities are coordinated with the Training Partnerships.

In Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Training Partnership also operates the staff development program under contract, providing training to BMCW staff on program requirements and BMCW operating procedures.

DCFS continues to support the Inter-tribal Child Welfare Training Partnership and provides funding for the tribal training manager at UW-Green Bay.

Foster Care Provider Training

DCFS is committed to the expansion of pre-service and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents. A foster parent training subcommittee of the state child welfare training council was developed to make recommendations on the implementation of pre-service and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents. The Training Council defined the scope, responsibilities, structure, and membership of the committee. The committee has membership representation from the training partnerships, counties, tribes, private agencies, foster and adoptive parents, the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, and DCFS.

The Foster Parent Training Committee created and distributed a 25 question Survey to county and tribal foster care coordinators inquiring about pre-service and ongoing foster parent training. The survey results were tallied to provide a summary of the current use of foster parent training throughout the state and the impediments to providing training. Based on the survey to Foster Care Coordinators and feedback from other forums, such as the Out-of Home Care Committee, PEP Implementation Team, and Wisconsin Adoptive and Foster Parent Association (WFAPA) the committee has recommended that foster parent training be divided into three phases:

- 1) Pre-placement (before the first foster placement);
- 2) Foundations (within the first 24 months of licensure) and;
- 3) On-going training

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

The content areas and modalities of each training phase will continue to be explored by the committee.

Other Training and Technical Assistance

DCFS supports academic degree programs using Title IV-E funds on a pass-through basis. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, and UW-Green Bay (jointly with UW-Oshkosh) operate Masters of Social Work (MSW) student stipend programs. UW-Green Bay also has a Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW) stipend program.

The Division conducts other types of technical assistance and program education activities, including hosting an annual child welfare conference for local agency administrators and managers and periodic program roundtable meetings on child welfare program topics. Through the regional offices, the Department provides ongoing technical assistance to counties and tribes regarding child welfare program knowledge, skills, and program requirements.

IV-E Funding for Training

DCFS provides financial support to the Training Partnerships primarily by passing through Title IV-E training funds based on match generated by the universities and the member agencies. The member county and tribal agencies provide cash contributions to the Training Partnerships. DCFS works with the universities to define procedures for counting member agency expenses as match. DCFS has also established a detailed fiscal reporting mechanism to ensure documentation of match expenses.

Specific training projects are also funded by DCFS using other federal funding sources such as Title IV-B and CAPTA. The Training Partnerships receive CAPTA funds for training related to child protective service assessments and the Training Partnerships also use university resources and member agency contributions to support training that is not IV-E reimbursable. Chafee Independent Living funds are not used for statewide training activities.

DCFS has issued a comprehensive IV-E training fiscal guide based on federal law, regulations, and audit findings to provide guidance to all grantees receiving IV-E funds. The fiscal guide describes in detail the types of expenses eligible for IV-E reimbursement at the enhanced training rate and the obligations of universities receiving IV-E funds.

F. Service Array

The availability, applicability, and accessibility of key service interventions are critical to helping families maintain or achieve safe home environments and to assure timely permanence for children who require temporary or permanent placement outside of their homes. As part of Wisconsin's child welfare program, county agencies, tribes, and the BMCW assure the availability of services through a variety of sources.

On behalf of the BMCW, the vendor agencies provide in-home safety services to families and ongoing case management services to families with children placed in out-of-home care. The

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

vendor agencies create specialized service networks with community service providers, through either subcontract, memoranda of understanding, or information and referral. These service networks include specific resources designed to meet the individualized needs of families based on the families' current case plan or progress evaluation. The BMCW has specified a standard list of services that must be available to all families based on their service needs.

Similarly, in the balance of the state, county and tribal agencies receive funds from the Department to support the delivery of prevention, early intervention, and ongoing assistance needed to assure child safety and permanence. Funds directed toward these services are provided through the Community Aids and Youth Aids programs, PSSF program, IV-E Incentive Funds program, and other state and local funding mechanisms. These services are available statewide, although counties have developed individualized service strategies based on the needs of their population and the availability of service providers. The DCFS gives counties and tribes considerable flexibility with local service strategies.

The DCFS uses a program planning process that requires local agencies to solicit community and program participant input establishing service priorities and service strategies. Through local PSSF program planning committees, Citizen Review Panels, or other coordination mechanisms local agencies have established collaborative structures to obtain input into local program planning.

In conjunction with the Division of Disability and Elder Services (DDES), the DCFS has developed the Coordinated Services Team Initiative. Based on fundamental core values and a strength-based approach to service provision, child welfare, substance abuse, and mental health agencies work together across systems in an effort to provide comprehensive services and supports to children and families. This initiative is aimed at systems change; therefore, it is a time-limited infusion of resources designed to assist counties in changing their service delivery systems. The two Divisions provide technical assistance and funding to counties in an effort to enhance collaboration, advocacy, and case planning with families involved in multiple systems. Currently, eighteen (18) counties use the CST approach, sixteen (16) counties have Integrated Services Programs (ISP), six (6) have combined CST and ISP, two (2) counties have wraparound with a managed care approach, one additional county is receiving training and technical assistance to develop a CST, and seven (7) counties/tribes are proposed for funding by October 1, 2007.

As a part of Wisconsin's Program Enhancement Plan (PEP), DCFS will work with key child welfare stakeholders to evaluate the availability and accessibility of services to children and their caregivers in order to respond effectively to the safety and permanency needs of children. DCFS will collaborate with county and tribal staff, as well as service providers, to develop strategies to target state resources to meet the service needs of children and families involved with the child welfare system.

As part of PEP Action Step T, DCFS conducted a statewide service survey to identify gaps in services and barriers to utilizing services. Responses from counties were due in April 2006. Results of the survey will be analyzed in the Spring of 2006 and findings will be shared with the

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

PEP Implementation Team. Using the survey information, DCFS will work with counties to address gaps and barriers to service delivery.

G. Agency Responsiveness to Community

The DCFS engages in ongoing consultation with local agencies, tribes, and key representatives of agencies or service delivery systems that interface with the child welfare system. Ongoing communication, coordination, and collaboration among the state child welfare program, its funding sources, and its key stakeholders (e.g., foster and adoptive parents, tribes, court systems, service providers, and consumers) are critical to protecting the safety of children, achieving permanency, and promoting the well-being of families. The DCFS continues to work with key stakeholder groups to improve communication and coordination. The input of stakeholders is actively sought by the DCFS and the input is used in the DCFS strategic planning process.

The DCFS regularly works with groups representing key constituencies in the child welfare system to identify and resolve issues. These groups include, but are not limited to, the Wisconsin Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, the Wisconsin County Human Services Association, the 11 Indian Tribes in Wisconsin, the Office of the Director of State Courts, elected officials at the state, tribal, and local levels, and other associations.

DCFS staff regularly meet with local agencies and service providers to discuss child welfare issues and identify ways to improve services and state-level support of the service delivery system. State staff participate in regional meetings of local child welfare and juvenile justice program managers.

In Milwaukee, a Partnership Council consisting of representatives from state and local government, the courts, service providers, and other key stakeholders meets regularly to discuss Milwaukee child welfare program issues. The BMCW provides the Partnership Council with regular reports on program activity in Milwaukee.

The state-level PEP Implementation Team consists of over 80 members representing counties, tribes, courts, advocates and many other agencies or groups with an interest in the child welfare program. The PEP Implementation team meets quarterly to provide direction on implementation of the PEP and other child welfare issues. The PEP Implementation team replaced the Child Welfare Executive Steering Committee (ESC) that met on a quarterly basis since May of 2001 to consider the results of the local assessment process and advise the DCFS on how to improve child welfare program performance.

The PEP Implementation Team and the predecessor ESC sustain the child welfare planning partnership with counties, tribes, courts, and other stakeholders through the implementation of the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan, the five-year Children and Family Services Plan, and other program planning efforts. The PEP Implementation Team structure with related committees provides a broad opportunity for counties, tribes, other state agencies, consumers, advocacy organizations, and other child welfare professionals who work together to ensure that the needed actions and strategies to improve the child welfare outcomes are implemented.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

The PEP Implementation Team:

- Guides the implementation of the plans.
- Ensures the input of staff, peers, consumers, community leaders, and others in the implementation process.
- Provides expertise and advice on resolution of competing issues and other problems as they arise.
- Strengthens and advances the interdisciplinary response to improving the safety, permanence, and well being of children.

The related PEP committees on out-of-home care, child welfare case process, adoption and quality improvement address details of PEP implementation and are composed of professionals in child protection, mental health, domestic violence, foster parenting, adoption, health care, law enforcement, the courts, alcohol and drug abuse, and other related fields. The committees actively involve consumers and other stakeholders in shaping the policies, procedures, practices, and services that comprise the PEP, CFSP, and the Wisconsin five-year plan. The committees also make recommendations to DCFS and consult with the full PEP Implementation Team as issues arise that are best shaped by a larger discussion.

The DCFS continues to support coordination between local child welfare agencies and local PSSF program planning committees. Collaborative efforts have included joint training, involvement in local assessments, and implementation of a combined, multi-year planning process.

H. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Efforts

The availability and quality of licensed out-of-home care placement providers in Wisconsin is supported by a variety of laws, administrative rules, and policies. Regulatory policies are developed by the Bureau of Programs and Policies (BPP) and the Bureau of Regulation and Licensing (BRL), with the BPP developing standards for licensing foster homes and treatment foster homes and the BRL developing and enforcing standards for group homes, private child placing agencies, shelter care facilities, and residential care centers for children and youth. The DCFS provides regular training for foster home licensors on licensing requirements. This training includes an overview of existing requirements, recent changes or new Division policies, and consultation with participants around case specifics.

The regulatory aspects of ensuring the safety of children and the quality of providers are driven by state statute and administrative rules as follows:

- Wisconsin's Children's Code, Chapter 48
 1. Placement Authorization
 2. Criminal Background Check Requirements
 3. Independent Investigations of Maltreatment Allegations Against Licensed Providers
 4. Notice to Foster Parents and Other Physical Custodians of Legal Proceedings
- Administrative Rules for Health and Family Services (HFS)
 1. HFS 12 - Caregiver Background Checks

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

2. HFS 37 - Information To Be Provided to Foster Parents
3. HFS 38 - Treatment Foster Care for Children
4. HFS 50 – Facilitating the Adoption of Children with Special Needs
5. HFS 51 – Adoption of Children with Special Needs
6. HFS 52 - Residential Care Centers for Children and Youth
7. HFS 54 - Child Placing Agencies
8. HFS 56 - Foster Home Care for Children
9. HFS 57 - Group Foster Care for Children
10. HFS 58 – Eligibility for the Kinship Care and Long-Term Kinship Care Program
11. HFS 59 – Shelter Care Facilities
12. HFS 94 – Patient Rights and Resolution of Patient Grievances

In late 2005, DCFS began work on draft changes to Ch. HFS 56, Ch. HFS 38, and Ch. HFS 54 as needed related to the Foster Parent Handbook, foster parent training, and capacity of foster home items in the PEP. The appendix to Ch. HFS 37, “Information for Foster Parents” was also being revised in 2005 to better inform agency staff and foster parents of the areas in which a child may need further assessment or treatment and to include emergency or crisis response plan information.

The BMCW, state Adoption Program, county and tribal human/social services agencies, and private child welfare agencies work together to ensure the availability of and access to foster and adoptive placement resources. State, local, and private agencies also plan joint recruitment efforts, such as the Southern Regional Foster Care and Adoption fair, Northcentral recruitment consortium, and Southeastern Wisconsin recruitment collaboration, to increase awareness of foster care and adoption, encourage family-building through the foster care and adoption systems, and increase placement resources for both programs.

To further help with the recruitment process Wisconsin is implementing the SAFE study process to develop foster/adopt resources. SAFE is an inclusive study process that covers both foster care and adoption. The State adoption program will be required to use this study process and counties will be offered the opportunity to participate. By using this study process DCFS will have more consistent and complete information on families approved for foster care and adoption. In addition, studied and approved resources will be available to all counties and tribes needing a permanence resource for a child in out-of-home care. The goal is to have the system implemented in eWiSACWIS by September 2006. Training will be offered both before and after implementation.

Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center

In 2005, the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center began work on the development of a new statewide foster care recruitment campaign. In discussion with DCFS, the Resource Center chose to focus on the foster care program based upon feedback from counties and the knowledge that many foster families end up adopting children in their home. Thus, a recruitment campaign targeting foster care will have an effect on adoption as well.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

In addition, the 1-800 toll free recruitment line previously operated by DCFS was transferred to the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center. If an inquiry is regarding foster care, the call is then referred to the appropriate county child welfare agency for follow-up; if the caller is interested in adoption, the person is provided with information about their appropriate regional adoption office. Notice is also provided to the local agency about the individual's interest in becoming a foster parent. The Resource Center has developed general recruitment packets for foster care, adoption, and both programs jointly.

The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center is also pursuing additional ways they can meet recruitment and retention needs identified by licensing agencies in Wisconsin. In late 2005 Resource Center staff discussed with DCFS the possibility of hosting a recruitment summit in 2006 with a speaker from the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning. Resource Center staff have developed a newsletter for foster families, and agency staff and have been conducting meetings with local agencies to gather information and ideas about how they can expand services to meet the needs of local agencies.

X. CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN FOR FFY 2007

Overview

The Department will continue to develop and implement program standards for safety, permanence, and well being of children and the overall improvement of the child welfare system. The standards implement provisions under federal law, including the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and the Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and improvement strategies included in the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP).

The following section of the plan describes specific activities planned for Title IV-B, Adoption, CAPTA, Chafee, and Tribal Child Welfare during the period of 2005 - 2009. Activities implemented in the next year will be done with FFY 2007 funds. Proposed budgets for FFY 2007 are attached to the plan.

Title IV-B Subpart I - Child Welfare Services

Title IV-B, Subpart I funding, has been declining over the last couple of years. In FFY 2005, Wisconsin's award decreased by 1.6% and in FFY 2006, the amount was reduced by another 2.7%. Due to these reductions in federal IV-B, Subpart I funding, DHFS has reduced most contracts for both FFY 05 and FFY 06.

Community Aids Program

No changes are anticipated in program policy for how Community Aids funds can be used for child welfare services. The Department has established a workgroup, including DCFS and counties, that is evaluating options that could revise the current funding structure for child welfare services. If any changes in the child welfare services funding structure result from this process, such changes would likely be implemented later than FFY 2007.

Youth Aids Program

The amount of IV-B Subpart I funds included in the Youth Aids program will remain about the same as previous years. No changes are anticipated in program policy for how Youth Aids funds can be used for juvenile justice services.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Programs

DCFS will work with the Wisconsin Association for Homeless and Runaway Services (WAHRS) to develop guidelines to assist programs in developing good working relationships with their individual county and law enforcement agencies, and develop policies regarding issues of confidentiality, mutual delivery of service, and information sharing with their local county human service departments. Runaway programs will continue to develop an array of services to

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

strengthen families and improve their ability to parent and provide a safe environment for their children. These services will include crisis counseling, family mediation, family counseling, and parenting classes. These services will support families that currently are not in contact with child protective services, and strengthen families that may be at-risk of intervention by CPS.

Planned Activities: Over the next 5 years, Runaway Programs will continue to strengthen families, prevent family dissolution, promote self-sufficiency, and assure permanent and stable homes for youth.

- Provide over 2,000 families with counseling annually
- Annually serve over 3,300 youth face-to-face
- Provide temporary shelter for approximately 3,600 youth annually
- Provide crisis counseling to over 15,000 youth annually

Over 95% of youth served by the Runaway Program will be reunited with their families or placed in a mutually agreed upon living situation.

A FFY 2007 budget request for IV-B Subpart 1 funds is included in the plan. The FFY 2007 plan assumes continuation of the FFY 2006 funding level.

CFSP for FFY 2007

IV-B Subpart II - Promoting Safe and Stable Families

Local PSSF Program Operations

The DCFS has refined the plan format used by counties to develop their 2005-2007 PSSF plans. Each county is using both individual and community outcomes and it is expected that agencies will use these results to make important programming decisions (some counties have already submitted revised 2005-2007 plans based on this and other factors). The new format includes federal outcomes used for the CFSR process with county specific data available on the State's eWiSACWIS data system. Programs are required to identify individual outcomes and county reports for CY2005 with this information. The new format focuses on ease of use and the ability to better apply outcome results to determine efficacy of programs.

The Wisconsin federal Subpart II grant award for FFY 2004 was larger than expected due to the discretionary appropriation at the federal level and increased Food Stamp utilization in the state for children. For the portion of the additional funds related to Family Support, Preservation, and Reunification, DCFS allocated additional funds to counties. DCFS is using a new allocation formula that provides for greater equity and, in particular, provides much needed additional funds to smaller, rural counties. As part of the local 2005-2007 plans, DCFS required counties to use the new PSSF monies to program enhancements identified in the Wisconsin PEP. PSSF funds will continue to be used for PEP implementation activities and other special projects related to family support, preservation, reunification and adoption.

Other Program Initiatives

DCFS will continue to promote and support collaborative efforts such as the Coordinated Service Teams, while supporting efforts that deal with short-term crisis issues for at-risk families. It is central that chronic, long-term issues impairing families to become strong and healthy. In addition, a pilot program involving the collaboration of BPP, other Divisions within the Department, and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections has been implemented to provide case management and wrap-around services in order to safely reunite female offenders with their children. Goals of the program are closely tied to objectives identified in Wisconsin's PEP, and include service components that address issues important to successful reunification such as: permanency, access to physical and emotional healthcare, AODA resources, on-going family assessment, safety planning, collaboration/advocacy with the child's educational system, etc. All services are designed for accessibility to both parents and children.

DCFS is advancing fatherhood initiatives by working with counties to identify and remove policies and practices that may be barriers to fathers and other non-custodial parents participating in child welfare cases and develop services/programs that are father-friendly. In addition, PSSF funds are being used to assist in enhancing Wisconsin's efforts to identify, locate, and involve fathers and paternal relatives in an effort to better meet the needs of children in the child welfare system.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

DCFS will also continue to work with counties and tribes to strengthen collaborative efforts at the local level to improve and enhance services to children and families. In response to one of the items in Wisconsin's PEP (Item G: Assuring compliance with ICWA), DCFS is using some of Wisconsin's PSSF funding for a Tribal Services Training Coordinator. This newly contracted position is reviewing the need for training and technical assistance among county and tribal workers in the areas of Indian Tribal Welfare, cultural issues, and federal and state requirements.

Continuing a change made in FFY 2005, PSSF funds will be used for technical assistance to agencies operating Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (POCAN) programs that provide training to paraprofessionals to be "home visitors" and provide parenting training/education of new parents. This is a prevention program intended to reduce child abuse and neglect. A recent evaluation of the POCAN program by the Department has shown it to be effective.

Use of Subpart 2 Funds for PSSF Services

Of the total Subpart 2 funds, 20% is used by the DCFS for state-level adoption promotion and support services activities. Approximately 5%, is used by DCFS for state operations, including training and technical assistance to counties and tribes. Slightly more than 5% is used to fund three statewide programs: POCAN, Coordinated Service Teams and Tribal Training Coordinator. The remaining 70% of the Subpart 2 funds are allocated to counties and tribes to fund support, preservation, and reunification programs and for three statewide service enhancement programming. Local agencies are required to apply the federal funding requirements for family support, preservation, and reunification services to meet the Subpart 2 spending requirements for those service areas

For the adoption promotion and support services portion of the Subpart 2 program, the PSSF funds are directed toward promoting and supporting adoption as a permanency outcome for children. For information about the adoption portion of PSSF funds, please see the adoption section of this plan.

A FFY 2007 budget request for IV-B Subpart 2 funds is included in the plan. The FFY 2007 plan assumes continuation of the FFY 2006 funding level.

State Matching Funds for Subpart 2

The PSSF funds for all categories, except adoption, are allocated to counties on a calendar year basis and tribes on a federal fiscal year basis. Under state policy for the PSSF program, local agencies are required to spend the required minimum amounts for preservation, support, and reunification. Local agencies are also required to use the other services amount on preservation, support, or reunification activities. Wisconsin does not currently operate any projects in the "other" services category. The DCFS uses the adoption amount at the state level as part of the overall financing for adoption program activities.

The required state match for the PSSF program is generated by county agencies using state funds provided through the Community Aids program or local tax levy funds. The estimated match amounts are based on local agency expenditure information reported to the DCFS. The

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

estimated match amounts shown in the CFS-101 form attached to the plan reflect the estimated minimum match expenditures for each of the PSSF categories. Actual match expenditures will typically exceed the minimum amounts, particularly for family preservation activities.

CFSP for 2007 Adoption Program

Increasing the total numbers of special needs adoptions, adoptions of children over the age of nine, and increasing the timeliness of adoption finalizations will continue as priorities for the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP). Over the past 6 years, Wisconsin has seen the number of finalized special needs adoptions double with large numbers of children over age nine. Increasing the timeliness of adoptions has been difficult, but implementation of the Action Steps in the PEP will improve the timeliness of adoption finalization.

DCFS focuses more attention on assigning potential adoptive cases earlier in the out-of-home experience so that more children can move to permanence within the federal adoption performance standard of 24 months and the state can make progress toward the national standard of 32%. Particular emphasis is placed on improving the timeliness of foster home conversions.

To help in this process, DCFS developed a Permanency Consultation Timeline to aid counties and the state permanency consultant's plan for child permanence without unnecessary delays or barriers. Staff from counties, the state, and private agencies were involved in developing this timeline, which was then updated with recommendations from the CFSR program enhancement planning process to reflect best practice.

The State Permanency Consultant (SPC) works with counties, tribes and private agencies to identify the most appropriate form of permanence for all children in out-of-home care. The SPC is an active participant in this process and assists the county, tribe, or private agency in ensuring that the necessary steps to achieve permanence are taken. In some cases, this may require the SPC to assist in carrying out some of the tasks, such as helping to identify treatment resources for the child so that treatment needs are addressed prior to termination of parental rights and adoptive placement. This helps ensure success for the child in both out-of-home care and subsequent to return home or adoptive placement.

The CFSR created an excellent opportunity for Wisconsin to look at the services the Adoption Program currently offers with an eye on those services that families have identified that they need. DCFS is taking advantage of this opportunity to expand services to foster and adoptive families as identified in the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP).

Planned activities for 2005 - 2009

- Development of the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center.
- Completion of the survey of families that have received post-adoption services to determine ways to better meet the needs of foster and adoptive families.
- Development of a comprehensive and sustained recruitment campaign that interfaces with the AdoptUsKids recruitment campaign.
- Partner with counties and tribes to more diligently search out relatives for children in out-of-home care.
- Fully implement the Permanency Consultation timeline

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- Finalize changes in the state adoption caseworkers' role to that of State Permanency Consultant.
- Further develop the Adoption Quality Assurance role to address quality improvement in all adoption service areas.
- Decrease the time from removal to permanence for children in out-of-home care.
- Implement a Resource Family Assessment process (Structured Analysis Family Evaluation) to help facilitate children moving to permanence more timely.

IV-B Part II Funds

The IV-B part 2 funds received by the Adoption Program are used to support the post-adoption resource centers (PARCs) and the private adoption contracts. There are currently 6 PARCs in operation providing information and referral services to all adoptive families, including domestic and international adoptions. The adoption contracts have made it possible to achieve high levels of quality adoptions in the state and change the focus of the state adoption caseworker to that of state permanency consultant.

The adoption program portion of IV-B Subpart II funding for FFY 2007 is included in the IV-B Subpart II budget attached to this plan.

International Adoptions

It is difficult to determine the number of international adoptions because families often go to agencies outside Wisconsin to obtain placements of international children. The adoptive families are not always prepared for the issues they may encounter as children develop and have little support from the adoption agency in many cases. If service needs develop, families can access the Post Adoption Resource Centers (PARCs), seek services from county human service departments, or purchase services from a private agency.

Currently, DCFS does not have the type of data necessary to make programmatic recommendations of how to minimize disruptions and dissolutions of international adoptions. Work is being completed to DCFS will develop a database of information to assist in planning. New forms have been developed to help track disruptions and dissolutions. The SPC staff will discuss these cases on a monthly basis with county staff to allow DCFS to report more complete information concerning these children and families.

The necessary information will be gathered by the State Permanency Consultants (SPC) and analyzed by the QA staff. With the SPCs in the counties on a regular basis, DCFS will be able to get more accurate and timely information. The SPCs will carry a laptop computer with tracking forms so that information can be readily documented and shared.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Use of Adoption Incentive Funds

Except for one year, DCFS have received adoption incentive funds. Funds received have all been used to support the state adoption program's recruitment and finalization efforts as well as the adoption contract needs in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare.

To the extent that additional adoption incentive funds are received, DCFS will focus the use of its incentive funds on initiatives that are designed to improve stability of placements and promote timely permanence for children. Listed below are examples of initiatives that center on the following objectives:

- Enhance support for foster/adoptive parents by increasing training, development and consultation, providing services such as respite and post adoption to enable them to deal with crises or attend training.
- Increase availability of and access to specialized treatment and therapeutic services to adoptive/foster families and children especially when MA or the county does not cover the services.
- Increase use of relatives as placement resources by paying for searches and other mechanisms to locate relatives of children in out-of-home care.
- Provide training and support to birthparents whose parental rights have been terminated or who are going through the TPR process to help them have closure or focus on the best interest of their children.

These services are provided to support families during pre- and post-adoption finalization. They are also available for domestic, special needs, and international adoptive families.

Post-Adoption Services

In recent years, more families have expressed their concerns to DCFS about lack of support once the adoption is finalized. This same concern surfaced when families and professionals were interviewed during the CFSR.

DCFS plans to continue its planning partnership with families, counties, tribes and other stakeholders in identifying specific initiatives that will have the most impact on program outcomes.

Through a four-year ACF grant to Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, DCFS is examining post-adoption services in Wisconsin from the perspective of the families and children. The information DCFS receives will be helpful in determining the most appropriate and effective array of post-adoption services. DCFS will use this information to enhance the services it offers through the post-adoption resource centers (PARCs) and a Foster Care Resource Center that is available to all families with children in out-of-home care or that have adopted.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Wisconsin Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center

Wisconsin has a pressing need for a steady and stable resource of quality foster families for children, but currently has very limited resources dedicated to supporting and sustaining foster parents, adoptive parents, and county foster care coordinators. The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center was created to increase support and services for foster families and professionals who work with foster care statewide.

The Resource Center has three offices across the state and has developed partnerships with the five Post-Adoption Resource Centers to expand their services and bridge the gap between foster care and adoption. In 2005, the Resource Center began: 1) work on a foster parent handbook, 2) developing a foster care recruitment campaign, 3) foster parent training workgroups with the Training Partnerships, 4) meetings with local agencies to determine their recruitment and resource needs, 5) establishment of an Advisory Council with quarterly meetings, 6) participation in the Out-of-Home Care PEP Committee, 7) outreach with foster parents associations at the statewide and local level, development of a web site, 8) and the creation of a statewide foster parent newsletter. Resource Center staff continually examined how they could support local agencies and foster parents in the activities they are involved in.

The Resource Center submitted quarterly outcome reports to DCFS summarizing the number and types of inquiries received, statewide activities with foster parents and professionals, and planned activities for the next quarter. The Advisory Council includes stakeholders from all levels of local agencies, public and private agencies, tribal agencies, foster parents and foster parent associations and provides recommendations and feedback to the Resource Center about ongoing and projected activities.

Cross-Jurisdictional Resources

DCFS currently works with counties, tribes, and private agencies to remove jurisdictional barriers to the placement of children. Adoption program planning is done jointly and is focused on how the program partners collectively can make the best placement decision for children in out-of-home care despite which agency may have developed the best possible resource.

Some specific strategies include:

- Work closely with the AdoptUsKids national recruitment campaign;
- Develop a state recruitment campaign to coincide with national campaigns;
- Work with AdoptUsKids as a pilot state to develop Indian family resources;
- Make the current State of Wisconsin post-adoption resource center (PARC) services available to all adoptive and foster care families;
- Using the permanency consultation timeline and role of the State Permanency Consultant, identify the most appropriate permanence option for children in OHC early;
- Promote cross-jurisdictional sharing of resources;
- Combine the foster family and adoptive family assessments into one format to be used for both purposes; and
- Train state, county, tribal, and private agency staff on MEPA and ICWA.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

All of these efforts are focused on ensuring that children in need of permanence are placed with the resource that can best meet their needs as early in the out-of-home care process as possible. This will reduce the trauma that children experience from multiple placements.

CFSP for FFY 2007

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan (CAPTA)

As a result of the Child and Family Services Review conducted in August of 2003, a number of issues were identified as needing improvement. Some of these program enhancement activities will be funded, at least in part, under the CAPTA grant. The first two years of the CAPTA five-year Plan consist entirely of activities in the PEP related to one or more of the 14 areas delineated in CAPTA. The subsequent three years of the five-year Plan will focus on other initiatives that are expected to grow out of the PEP activities.

A. Scope of CPS Intervention

CAPTA areas:

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect. [section 106(a)(1)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Define the scope of cases requiring CPS intervention.

This initiative was included in Wisconsin's Program Enhancement Plan as a result of observations from both the PEP Core Team and technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Protective Services. In part due to Wisconsin having a county-administered system with a strong tradition of local control, there is significant variation in the following decisions: screening (whether to respond to a report or to close it without contact), urgency (how quickly to respond), and the character of a non-CPS response to reports (e.g. "child welfare checks"). These are all decisions generally associated with the Access function.

Policy guidance for the Access function was issued in 2005 and became effective in March 2006 with the issuance of the "Child Protective Services Access Standard for Receipt and Analysis of Report Information." The Standard includes a definition of who the CPS system seeks to serve as well as guidance related to 1) screening criteria, 2) agency response to non-CPS issues, 3) criteria for response time, and how to record multiple reports of the same incident or episode of alleged maltreatment and multiple findings within the same episode.

Every decision in the CPS case process is dependent on a clear understanding of who the CPS system is designed to serve. Screening and urgency criteria must reflect and support this understanding. Criteria for information gathering and analysis at initial assessment, which cases are opened for ongoing services, and when cases can be closed are all dependent upon a clear understanding of whom the CPS system serves. Therefore, revisions to the CPS Investigation and Ongoing Standards will continue to define the scope of CPS in Wisconsin. This work will continue over the next three years.

B. State Standards

CAPTA areas:

- Enhancing the general child protective system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols. [section 106(a)(4)].
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Increase our ability to help children remain safely at home by developing the *Safety Intervention Standards* to include safety assessment, safety planning, and assessment of parent/caregiver protective capacities and updating the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*.

Safety assessment and planning is a skilled activity essential to CPS practice throughout the life of a case, yet it continues to be difficult for many caseworkers and supervisors. It is particularly difficult for staff to develop safety plans that are sufficient in controlling the threats to safety and to develop measurable treatment plans that are effective in establishing and maintaining a safe home.

In addition, the Child Welfare Case Process committee identified the need to integrate safety threats into the case planning process by incorporating the concept of parent/caregiver protective capacities in training, policies, and decision-making instruments. This provides a clearer path for establishing sufficient in-home safety plans and for defining when a family is “done” and no further CPS services are needed.

To accomplish this:

- The DCFS collaborated with the Child Welfare Case Process Committee and the NRCCPS to develop the *Safety Intervention Standards*. These Standards are state-of-the-art and reflect the best current knowledge in safety.
- Tools in eWiSACWIS were revised to support the *Safety Intervention Standards*. . The DCFS will continue to work with the Child Welfare Case Process Committee as well as other child welfare stakeholders to continue to refine tools in the automated system.
- Safety training curricula will be revised and expanded to reflect the revised standards and to support the acquisition of the skills necessary to develop, implement, and monitor effective safety plans. This may include the development of new courses in safety assessment and planning.
- Revisions will occur to the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *CPS Ongoing Standards* to further enhance child protective services case practice.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

This initiative began with the Access Standard and will continue as the Safety Intervention Standards become effective and the Investigation and Ongoing Standards are revised. All of the activities will be completed in three years.

C. Family Participation

CAPTA areas:

- Improving the case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families. [section 106(a)(3)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Improve family participation in case planning.

Efforts have been made over the previous five years to increase family participation in case planning. The *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* require it, and the Child Welfare Training Partnerships have been providing training that reflects and supports the standard. In addition, engaging families is an underlying principle found in the *Safety Intervention Standards* as well as in Wisconsin's Continuous Quality Improvement process. During the following three years, the DCFS will collaborate with the Child Welfare Training Partnership to use the results from the Continuous Quality Improvement process to further develop training that will increase caseworker skills in engaging families in the case planning process, as well as improve case worker skills in developing case plans.

D. Safety of Children with Relatives

CAPTA areas:

- Enhancing the general child protective system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols. [section 106(a)(4)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Effectively assess the safety of a child placed in a relative's home.

Over the last several years state standards and eWiSACWIS have, as part of the Out-Of-Home Safety Plan instrument developed and implemented, a process for assessing the safety of a specific child when placed in a specific licensed facility, but there was not a process for assessing safety specifically in an unlicensed, relative home. Throughout the development of the *Safety Intervention Standards* in 2005, the PEP Child Welfare Case Process Committee focused on providing guidance for CPS staff when placing children in the home of a relative. The committee determined that revisions and additions were needed to the safety assessment tool in order to identify and assess safety threats when placing children in an unlicensed, relative home.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Relative safety assessment was an item in Wisconsin's PEP renegotiation process. As a result, DCFS will review continue to review current models for assessing the safety of kinship placements, as well as relevant literature, and seek technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Protective Services to develop criteria, policy, and procedures for assessing safety in kinship placements. DCFS will:

- further develop and issue guidance for documenting the assessment within the current eWiSACWIS system
- work with the Child Welfare Training Partnerships to include this safety assessment procedure in the relevant training curricula

The above activities will be completed within 3 years.

E. Program Coordination

CAPTA areas:

- Creating and improving the use of multidisciplinary teams and interagency protocols to enhance investigations; and improving legal preparation and representation, including—(i) procedures for appealing and responding to appeals of substantiated reports of abuse and neglect; and (ii) provisions for the appointment of an individual appointed to represent a child in judicial proceedings. [section 106(a)(2)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Child Protective Services/Law Enforcement Coordination

Wisconsin goal: Improve the coordination between CPS and law enforcement agencies to increase safety for children and other family members while assuring clarity in the differences between the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

In 2005, the DCFS continued to provide technical assistance to county agencies in developing Memoranda of Understanding with law enforcement agencies by utilizing the information found in the *Standard for Collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies*. This work will continue as CPS and Law Enforcement agencies implement the previously referenced 2005 Wisconsin Act 232.

Additionally, over the next three years the DCFS will continue to involve law enforcement professionals in identifying the impact on their agencies resulting from changes in CPS practice and policy and advocate for training and other supports that will assist in any changes that law enforcement agencies might need to make.

DV/CPS Collaboration Project

Wisconsin goal: Improve the CPS response in cases where domestic violence is present.

The DCFS plans to continue its efforts in supporting and enhancing the collaborative relationship between domestic violence and CPS agencies. Specialized curriculum on domestic violence for CPS caseworkers will be updated to reflect changes in law, best practice, and policy. This will include an expanded training component on collaboration with domestic violence service providers.

Information on domestic violence issues is included as part of pre-service and/or foundation training.

The DCFS will also:

- Work with key stakeholders to develop a domestic violence handbook for child protective services staff.
- Include information on the identification of and response to domestic violence in the development of CPS standards and policies
- Identify other child welfare policy areas with domestic violence-related safety concerns and work with DV advocates to address the changes needed.
- Continue the annual joint regional meetings of DV and CPS agencies.
- Continue regular training and updates on the CPS system and policies for DV program staff.

County and Tribal Child Welfare

Wisconsin goal: Improve the coordination between county and tribal child welfare agencies to increase safety for children and other family members.

The DCFS has been involved in working with county and tribal child welfare agencies to enhance the response to child abuse or neglect referrals, the initial assessment/investigation process, and the ongoing services process. In 2006, staff from the DCFS as well as the DHFS Tribal Affairs unit began working with counties and tribes in developing child welfare agreements in order to clarify roles and responsibilities in CPS cases, enhance communication, and provide needed services and supports to tribal children and their families. This work will continue over the next three years.

Guardian ad Litem Training

Wisconsin goal: Support an ongoing multi-disciplinary effort to provide training for guardians ad litem.

DCFS continues to cosponsor the Guardian ad Litem conference each fall. BPP staff are involved in the multi-disciplinary planning committee to assure that information critical to representing children who have been maltreated, who are unsafe in their homes, or who are in the out-of-home care system is presented at each conference.

F. Coordinated Services

CAPTA area:

- Supporting and enhancing collaboration among public health agencies, the child protection system, and private community-based programs to provide child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment services (including linkages with education systems) and to address the health needs, including mental health needs, of children identified as abused or neglected, including supporting prompt, comprehensive health and developmental evaluations for children who are the subject of substantiated child maltreatment reports. [section 106(a)(14)].

Wisconsin goal: Expand the coordinated services team initiative.

The Coordinated Services Team (CST) initiative continues. Although the initiative is not funded by CAPTA, the staff position funded by CAPTA will continue to provide technical assistance to the initiative to assure consistency with the Standards for all cases that are part of the CPS system.

The effort to evaluate and compare the case planning format for CPS cases with the format for CST cases will continue as part of the PEP activities described above in reviewing and revising Standards and eWiSACWIS.

G. CPS Initial Assessment and Case Findings

CAPTA areas:

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect. [section 106(a)(1)]
- Improving the case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families. [section 106(a)(3)].

Wisconsin goal: Revise the *CPS Investigation Standards* to provide greater clarity related to the case finding decision-making process,

“Substantiation” is the finding made by child protective services (CPS) staff that a child has been maltreated or that a specific person has maltreated a child and is based on the lowest evidentiary standard (i.e., a preponderance of the evidence). There are problems associated with substantiation. It is used for purposes for which it was not originally intended (e.g., criminal prosecutions, gate keeping for CHIPS proceedings, licensing and employment decisions, and gate keeping for case opening and eligibility for services). This problem is heightened by the lack of uniformity in application from one county to another in terms of what is considered abuse and neglect, and which cases are screened in and screened out.

As stated previously, revisions to the case finding policy will be included into an integrated revision of the *CPS Investigation Standards*. In order to address concerns related to the case finding decision-making process the DCFS will work with the Child Welfare Case Process Committee to:

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- explore the use an alternative or differential response approach to CPS cases,
- incorporate 2005 Wisconsin Act 232, which makes the decision by CPS to investigate reports of non-caregiver abuse discretionary, into the Standards,
- further clarify the unique roles and function of CPS and law enforcement and,
- highlight the assessment of parent/caregiver protective capacities as they relate to impending danger threats to child safety.

The DCFS will use technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Protective Services to complete these revisions in 2007.

Description of Services and Training to be Provided [sec. 106(b)(2)(C)]

The majority of the training to be provided with CAPTA funds has been described above. In addition, CAPTA funds will continue to be used to cosponsor the annual Child Abuse and Neglect Conference, as well as the annual Tribal Conference.

Funding will be provided to each of the four Child Welfare Training Partnerships and the Tribal Child Welfare Training Partnership to support pre-service training, fund curriculum development and training for CPS staff and supervisors not eligible for funding under Title IV-E. In 2005, curriculum was developed for the activities and skills necessary for CPS Access. The next planned revision is the “Managing Sufficient Safety” curriculum to incorporate requirements and practice guidance from the *Safety Intervention Standards*. As other training needs are identified as a result of policy development, CAPTA funds will be used to support that training, at least in part.

For the most part, CAPTA funds are used to support training, policy development, technical assistance, and program development rather than direct services to individuals, families, or communities. CAPTA funds support a full-time position in the DCFS, a CPS Specialist, who, in addition to coordinating policy and program development and training initiatives, responds directly to the public on concerns about how CPS cases have been handled, how to access services and other resources, and how the CPS program and child welfare system in Wisconsin generally operate. This position also provides technical assistance to communities and providers that are developing policies and practices about interaction with the CPS system as they seek to provide better services to their clients.

An area where DCFS will continue to focus our training efforts is safety decision making. The DCFS has been working with the Training Partnerships and ACTION for Child Protection to develop, revise, and provide additional safety training in the state. We are currently in the process of training trainers statewide. The training will begin to be offered across the state this summer. Following is a description of the training:

Managing Sufficient Safety in CPS is a two-day learning experience for caseworkers and supervisors emphasizing providing sufficient safety intervention. The two-day workshop is followed by a complementary supervisory learning opportunity using case specific consultation. Training begins with a review of basic safety assessment and safety planning competencies leading to consideration of sufficiency of safety plans. The

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

curriculum promotes safety intervention as a continuum of assessment and planning not specific to a particular function. The curriculum addresses essential knowledge and skill required by all CPS staff regardless of initial assessment or ongoing assignment. The curriculum will emphasize critical safety assessment competency, developing sufficient safety plans, and managing sufficient safety plans. The curriculum includes attention to safety management of safety plans within ongoing CPS.

Assurances/Compliance with Eligibility Requirements

The following is a description of Wisconsin's compliance with the new CAPTA requirements added in 2003. Statutory language referenced in this section can be found at: <http://folio.legis.state.wi.us/quickfind.html>, choosing Chapter 48 Children's Code and entering in the appropriate statute number.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(ii)] *Policies and procedures...to address the needs of infants born and identified as affected by illegal substances or withdrawal symptoms from prenatal drug exposure, including a requirement that health care providers ...notify the child protective services system...*

Wisconsin Statutes state that “Any hospital employee who provides health care, social worker or [court appointed] intake worker ...may refer an infant ... to a physician for testing of the bodily fluids ... for controlled substances or controlled substance analogs...The physician may test the infant ... to ascertain whether or not the infant ... has controlled substances or controlled substance analogs in the bodily fluids...If the results of the test indicate that the infant does have controlled substances or controlled substance analogs in the infant's bodily fluids, the physician shall make a report under s.46.238...” [Sec.146.0255, WI Stats.]

The report is not made under Chapter 48, the Children's Code, and therefore is not a child abuse or neglect report. Instead, the report is made under Chapter 46, which is the authority establishing county human/social service departments.

Although this statutory language has existed for some years and CPS agencies have been accepting and responding to such reports, a policy memo was issued reminding CPS agencies of their responsibility to accept such reports.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(iii)] *The development of a plan of safe care for the infant born and identified as being affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms.*

Wisconsin Statutes state “If a county department ... or [BMCW] receives a report under s.146.0255 (2), the county department shall offer to provide appropriate services and treatment to the child and the child's mother...or the county department shall make arrangements for the provision of appropriate services or treatment.” [Sec. 46.238, Stats.].

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

This statutory language has also existed for some years. The policy memo issued reminding county agencies and BMCW of their responsibility to accept such reports (see above) included policy requiring an assessment of safety of the child and the development and execution of a safety plan, if the child is determined to be unsafe. In addition, this policy will be incorporated into the revisions of the *CPS Investigation Standards*.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(iv)] *Procedures for the immediate screening, risk and safety assessment, and prompt investigation of such reports.*

Risk assessment tools, in addition to a safety assessment tool, are part of eWiSACWIS and the Wisconsin Model. Risk assessment and safety assessment are required by the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*. In 2005, the DCFS issued the *Access Standard for the Receipt and Analysis of Report Information* which outlines the requirements for screening a CPS report. This Standard and associated changes in the automated system became effective in March 2006.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(v)] *Triage procedures for the appropriate referral of a child not at risk of imminent harm to a community organization or voluntary preventive service.*

Policy was developed and issued requiring CPS agencies to provide information and referral services to community agencies for families that they have determined do not need CPS services following an initial assessment and families they have determined no longer need CPS services following a case progress evaluation. The discussion with the family and the referral process must be documented in the case record. This has been the practice in most CPS agencies for years and is now reflected in published policy. In addition, this policy will be incorporated into the revisions of the *CPS Investigation Standards*.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(ix)] *Provisions to require a State to disclose confidential information to any Federal, State, or local government entity, or any agent of such entity, that has a need for such information in order to carry out its responsibility under law to protect children from abuse and neglect.*

Existing state statutory language authorizes disclosure to a “federal agency, state agency of this state or any other state or local governmental unit located in this state or any other state that has a need for a report or record in order to carry out its responsibility to protect children from abuse and neglect...” [Sec. 48.981(7)(a)17., Stats]. The Wisconsin Attorney General issued an opinion that the statutory language requires that information be released to the authorized entities or person on demand.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(xiii)] *Provisions and procedures requiring that in every case involving an abused or neglected child which results in a judicial proceeding, a guardian ad litem, who has received training appropriate to the role, shall be appointed to represent the child.*

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

In 1997, Wisconsin established Supreme Court Rule Chapter 35 (Eligibility for Appointment as Guardian ad Litem for a Minor), which prohibits an attorney from accepting a GAL appointment from the court in juvenile and family court proceedings unless specified training criteria are met. The rule became effective in 1999. Enforcement of the rule is handled at the county level.

Under s. 48.07(5)(c), Stats., Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers must complete a training program prior to being designated as a CASA and each volunteer must complete continuing education annually. The training shall include instruction on recognizing child abuse and neglect, cultural competency, child development, court procedures, permanency planning, the role of the CASA volunteer, information gathering and documentation, and juvenile court observation.

In addition to the above requirements, there is a conference every year with training for guardians ad litem, for which they receive credit. The first conference was held in 1999. The conference is well attended every year and receives high evaluations from participants. DCFS staff are involved in planning for the conference and DCFS is a co-sponsor of the conference.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xviii)] *Provisions and procedures to require that a representative of the child protective services agency shall, at the initial time of contact with the individual subject to a child abuse and neglect investigation, advise the individual of the complaints or allegations made against the individual, in a manner that is consistent with laws protecting the rights of the reporter*

Policy was developed, published, and disseminated requiring CPS representatives to advise the alleged maltreater, at the beginning of the initial contact, of the allegations against him or her. The policy was developed with input from county CPS staff, tribal child welfare staff, law enforcement, and legal counsel. It balances a person's right to honest information with the need to fulfill statutory mandates to protect children from serious harm. This policy will be integrated into the Legal Core training through the Child Welfare Training Partnerships and will be included in the revisions of the *CPS Investigation Standards*.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xix)] *Provisions addressing the training of representatives of the child protective services system regarding the legal duties of the representatives, which may consist of various methods of informing such representatives of such duties, in order to protect the legal rights and safety of children and families from the initial time of contact during investigation through treatment.*

Throughout 2005, training entitled "Parental Notification of Rights: Implications for the Agency Worker" was provided for CPS staff. This training will continue throughout 2006 and 2007 and the information will be integrated into the Legal Core offered by the Child Welfare Training Partnership. Additionally, a brochure for parents, including a description of the CPS process and the family's rights, will be issued to all counties and tribes and BMCW to use when interviewing parents by the end of the 2006.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xx)] *Provisions and procedures for improving the training, retention and supervision of caseworkers.*

A major initiative in Wisconsin's PEP is expanding the frequency, accessibility, and application value of child welfare training in Wisconsin. This includes training for supervisors to assist them in providing clinical supervision for caseworkers. The DCFS and other stakeholders have developed a draft administrative rule that outlines requirements at the pre-service, foundation, and ongoing levels for caseworkers and supervisors.

Another initiative in the PEP is to evaluate the workload of caseworkers and supervisors and the availability and accessibility of services needed to keep children safe and address the underlying contributors to child abuse and neglect. In 2005, a workgroup consisting of child welfare stakeholders was formed to examine these issues.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxi)] *Provisions and procedures for referral of a child under the age of 3 who is involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect to early intervention services funded under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*

A policy requiring referral to early intervention services (Birth to 3 Program) of a child under the age of 3 years who is substantiated as having been abused or neglected was developed, published, and disseminated to all county CPS agencies and BMCW. The policy was developed with input from county CPS professionals, Birth to 3 Program Staff and legal counsel. Activities related to the referral must be documented in the case record. This policy will be included into the planned revisions to the *CPS Investigation Standards*.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxii)] *Not later than June 25, 2005 (2 years after the enactment of Public Law 108-36), provisions and procedures for requiring criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relatives residing in the household.*

Wisconsin Statutes state that "The department, a county department, a child welfare agency or a school board shall obtain all of the following with respect to a [foster home, treatment foster home, group home, shelter care facility and adoptive home and] a non client resident of an entity...: A criminal history search from the records maintained by the department of justice..." [Sec. 48.685(2)(am), Stats.]

Citizen Review Panel Requirements - The 2003 CAPTA amendments created the following additional requirements.

- *requiring each citizen review panel to examine the practices (in addition to policies and procedures) of State and local agencies to evaluate the extent to which the agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities [section 106(c)(4)(A)];*

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- *requiring each panel to provide for public outreach and comment in order to assess the impact of current procedures and practices upon children and families in the community [section 106(c)(4)(C)]; and*
- *requiring each panel to make recommendations to the State and public on improving the child protective services system at the State and local levels. The appropriate State agency is to respond to the panel and State and local child protective services agencies in writing no later than six months after the panel recommendations are submitted. The State agency's response must include a description of whether or how the State will incorporate the recommendations of the panel (where appropriate) to make measurable progress in improving the State and local CPS systems [section 106(c)(6)].*

Some of the functions of the Citizen Review Panels are being incorporated into the quality assurance procedures being developed as part of Wisconsin PEP. Citizen Review Panel members will participate in CFSR-type program reviews, which will include a review of practice not only in their own counties but also in other counties across the state. This will give them a broader view of practice and policy in the state.

A description of the new requirements has been shared with each panel. More funding is being appropriated to the three citizen review panels to assist them in carrying out the additional functions. The DCFS will increase coordination of the Citizen Review Panel activities with other quality assurance and policy development activities.

Citizen Review Panel members participated in the training and discussion conducted by the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues on family rights. They will be part of informing changes in CPS practice in Wisconsin related to assuring that family rights are understood and respected throughout a family's involvement with CPS. Citizen Review Panel members will also be part of the workgroups established, as discussed in the State Plan, to develop, clarify, and modify statewide policies and standards of practice.

CFSP for FFY 2007

Chafee Independent Living Program

Wisconsin will continue to operate its Independent Living (IL) Program to address the needs of youth in and exiting foster care, comply with the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee Act), and follow the recommendations of the Wisconsin June 2000 *Independent Living for Children in Out-of-Home Care* study. IL services are provided through Wisconsin's county-administered child welfare service system and by tribes, and programs may vary in their approaches to implement and administer independent living services.

Program Eligibility

Wisconsin's IL Program provides services and supports to youth aged 15-21 years. Eligibility for Wisconsin Chafee services includes those youth that have been in out-of-home care (OHC) placement in Wisconsin for at least 6 months after the age of 15 or older with eligibility continuing to the age of 21 years. Youth that are in OHC placement for six months and adopted after the age of 15 years are also eligible for services. Youth exiting care prior to age 18 due to adoption, guardianship (s. 48.977), long-term Kinship Care or hospitalization, may continue to be eligible for IL services, although eligibility for certain benefits (e.g., room and board, Medicaid) may be limited by the Chafee Act.

Distribution of Funds

Chafee funds are allocated via State/County and State/Tribal contracts. Recipients of CFCIP and ETV-funded allocations was expanded in 2005 to include 71 counties, 3 tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), and the Division of Juvenile Corrections. The Chafee funding will continue to be used to develop, expand, and strengthen local independent living services for youth. The State allocates funding to these local agencies based on the average number of youth eligible for and receiving independent living services in each community. This formula was developed and used to ensure that each agency receives an amount of the available funding that is commensurate with the number of local youth eligible for and receiving assistance to achieve independence.

Wisconsin expects to continue to receive reductions in federal Chafee funds due to declining out-of-home care caseloads. These reductions have occurred despite the fact that the number of older youth eligible for and receiving IL services has increased during the funding periods. While Wisconsin will strive to ensure that youth receive efficient and effective IL services and supports, significant program changes may become necessary over the next few years to reflect the decreased federal resources and an increased service population.

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program:

- 1. Describe how the State will establish, expand or strengthen its post secondary education and training to achieve the purpose of the ETV program and to accomplish the purposes of the Acts. Describe the methods used to operate the program efficiently and assure compliance with the conditions specified in subsection 477(i):*

The DCFS will use the ETV program funds to expand the independent living services at the state and local levels. The existing DCFS Scholarship Program for youth aging out of out-of-home care will increase the amount of the individual scholarships available to youth for post-secondary education and training and extend the period for which youth will be eligible for the scholarship funds. Additional funding will be provided to local agencies to expand services and increase financial support to assist youth with preparation for and participation in post-secondary institutions.

The ETV program was implemented in 2004 by county and tribal child welfare agencies 2004. DCFS Memo Series 2003-10 provided direction for implementation of the new program and outlines program requirements. The memo describes ETV Program requirements and desired outcomes that must be met while allowing individual agencies the flexibility to implement the services locally in the most effective manner possible for all youth. Regional meetings are held to further explain and discuss program implementation, requirements, and practice issues regarding the ETV program.

To increase the likelihood that youth will be motivated and eligible to participate in post-secondary institutions, local agency Independent Living Coordinators will coordinate team and other resource involvement in addition to working directly with youth for several years prior to their aging out of out-of-home care. Youth will be supported using the original CFCIP funds to complete a high school education or equivalent, improving their ability to meet post-secondary education or training program eligibility requirements. The CFCIP and ETV Programs will then provide ongoing support to youth by providing services and financial assistance necessary to help them successfully participate in and complete post-secondary programs.

It is anticipated that services, support, and financial assistance will be individualized, based on the assessment of the youth's needs. Generally, assistance will be provided in accordance with the following guidelines:

- DCFS Scholarship Program will provide funding for any direct costs; i.e., tuition and fees associated with attending an institution of higher learning.
- Scholarships will not exceed the lesser of \$5000 per year or the total cost of attendance as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act.
- Local agencies will use ETV funds for the purchase of technical equipment or assistance to include, but not be limited to, computers, calculators, and supplies associated with post-secondary coursework.
- DCFS Scholarship Program and local agencies may provide additional assistance or support necessary for successful completion of higher education, including, but not

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

limited to: tutoring, transportation, books, child care, housing, program entry testing, costs, incentives, leadership/workshop/vocational activities, etc.

ETV funds will be allocated and accounted for via separate contracting, accounting, and reporting processes.

2. *Program Eligibility:*

- Education and training vouchers (ETV) will be available to all youth meeting current State independent living eligibility criteria (i.e., youth aged 15 to 21 years placed in out-of-home care at the age of 15 or older for a period of not less than six months) for costs associated with post-secondary attendance and participation.
- Eligibility will also be extended to youth up to 23 years of age who were participating in the voucher program on the date they attained age 21, as long as they are enrolled in a full-time post-secondary program and are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of that program.
- Youth adopted from foster care after attaining 6 months in out-of-home care followed by adoption at the age of 15 years or older shall be considered eligible for ETV program assistance.

3. *Education and Training Vouchers Program Criteria:*

- Vouchers shall be available for the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education, as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.
- Voucher amounts shall not exceed the lesser of \$5000 per year or the total cost of attendance, as defined in section 472 of that Act.
- The amount of a voucher under this section shall be disregarded for purposes of determining the recipient's eligibility for, or the amount of, any other Federal or federally-supported assistance, except that the total amount of all assistance should not exceed the total cost of attendance. The DCFS Scholarship Program shall take appropriate steps to prevent duplication of benefits under this and other Federal or federally-supported programs.
- The program is coordinated with other appropriate education and training programs. State and local agencies will partner with secondary and post-secondary institutions and each other to increase awareness of the educational challenges faced by youth aging out of out-of-home care and the ETV Program. This collaboration was initiated by Wisconsin in 2001 under the CFCIP, resulting in the development of the statewide Higher Education Opportunities for Youth Advisory Group. Modifications to the existing DCFS Scholarship Program were made according to input received by all of these partners to better meet needs of youth while fulfilling the new requirements of the ETV program.

Program Development:

- Assessments of youth skill, needs, and interest areas will continue as implemented under the CFCIP. Youth, child welfare agencies, foster parents, and biological family members will participate in development of case plans to support youth's educational goals. Case plans shall include, but are not limited to, assisting youth to: identify post-secondary education or training as a viable option, identify potential vocations and careers, identify and address other areas of need (e.g., housing, transportation) that impact successful participation in higher education, and develop Independent Living Transition Plans to enhance the success of the youth transitioning to self sufficiency.
- Outreach efforts to continue supporting youth after leaving out-of-home care will continue as implemented under the CFCIP. Additional efforts will be implemented to inform, remind, and encourage these youth of the higher education assistance available to them prior to reaching age 21 and potentially up to age 23.
- The DCFS Scholarship Program will continue to include scholarship funds up to \$5000 per youth per year and allow youths to receive assistance through the fund on an ongoing basis as long as other scholarship eligibility criteria (e.g., satisfactory progress) are met. Youth must complete an application for the scholarship program and provide proof of acceptance to the post-secondary institution.
- Funding for attendance costs at post-secondary institutions will be provided directly to the institution upon receipt of a letter of acceptance/admission from the institution on behalf of the youth.
- Purchase orders may be used for other costs associated with participation in the post-secondary program.
- Data will be maintained by the local agencies and the DCFS Scholarship Program, including: the number of youth completing a high school education, the number of youth attending post-secondary institutions, the number and types of degrees or certification achieved by participating youth, and the amount and type of financial assistance provided utilizing ETV funds.
- Independent living roundtables regarding the ETV Program were held prior to program implementation in 2003-04 and will continue to be held each year. These meetings are scheduled in various regions around the State to provide technical assistance to local Independent Living Coordinators and facilitate sharing and discussion between caseworkers and agencies regarding practice issues in the area of helping youth access and achieve higher education.

Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)

1. *Discuss how the state will design, conduct and/or strengthen programs to achieve the purposes of section 477(b)(2)(A) and section 477(a)(1-6) of the Act.*

Political Subdivisions: Wisconsin has 72 counties and 11 federally-recognized tribes. All counties are currently and will continue operating CFCIP-funded independent living programs. Tribes have been given the opportunity to receive CFCIP funds from the State to operate tribal independent living programs. Three of the 11 tribes, Ho-Chunk, Lac du Flambeau, and Lac Courte Oreilles receive independent living funds to serve eligible tribal youth. Independent living services by tribes are coordinated with services by county agencies through child welfare coordination agreements between counties and tribes called 161 agreements. The DCFS will consider funding other tribes that wish to operate independent living programs.

All Wisconsin counties have historically operated some aspects of independent living programs, including working with foster care providers to teach youth independent living skills and permanency planning responsibilities. The majority of counties also provided services to improve the skills of youth to prepare them to exit out-of-home care and make successful transitions to adulthood. With the implementation of CFCIP, funds have been allocated to all counties so they can provide services to improve skills of youth aged 15-18 and a transitional services component for youth age 18-21. Smaller counties were encouraged to form multi-county consortia to deliver independent living services, particularly services to improve skills of youth aged 15-18 and the transitional services component for youth aged 18-21. In 2005, nine counties are organized into 4 service consortia.

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program will design and deliver programs to achieve the purposes of sections 477(b)(2)(A) and 477(a)(1-6) of the Act. CFSP statewide goals and activities to address these purposes are as follow:

A. Help Youth Transition to Self-Sufficiency

- Continue providing an array of services and support for youth that address the following areas: secondary education, post-secondary education, vocational and employment support, daily living skills, budget and financial management, housing, health education and prevention, connection to caring adults, and risk prevention. Program design may vary according to geographic factors; e.g., rural or urban, availability of community resources, housing options. Agencies funded for IL services may serve youth directly or contract for IL services through other agencies. Collaboration with other professionals, caring adults, human service agencies, and other community resources will remain a critical source for obtaining and coordinating services for youth.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- Continue providing financial assistance as appropriate for room and board, education, and other needs that may arise as youth work to achieve self-sufficiency. Local IL programs are allowed to spend up to 25% of their allocation for room and board for youth meeting the room and board requirements (i.e., youth aging out of care that are in care on their 18th birthday) as stated in the Chafee Act. Youth may receive Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program assistance locally or through the state's DCFS Scholarship Program. Other financial assistance for IL-related costs may be provided at the discretion of the local agency. Connecting youth to other community resources that assist clients financially will also be used.
- Assess each youth's level of independent living skills functioning and develop an Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) to address assessed areas of need and youth interests. Individual assessments and plans are required for each eligible youth; however, agencies may select the assessment method or tool used and the ILTP format.
- Provide IL training for IL Coordinators, foster parents, members of youth teams, and other county, tribal, and private agency caseworkers. The State IL Coordinator, upon request from local agencies, will conduct Basic IL Training for new IL coordinators. Life skills development and other IL training will be developed and conducted in coordination with the University of Wisconsin's Training Partnerships, the National Resource Center for Youth Development, and other resources as appropriate to address specific topics of interest or concern. Sessions on independent living may also be incorporated into other existing training curricula.
- Increase the involvement of foster parents as a key resource for ongoing youth support and skills development. Independent living skills are learned over a lifetime, beginning at a very young age. Foster parents are important people in the healthy development of children and young adults. The foster home is a setting where skills training may be planned or can occur naturally in the course of daily activities. Local IL programs will continue their efforts to work with youth and foster parents, incorporating foster parents as trainers for youth skill development. This will be documented in the Independent Living Transition Plan and the training activities reported annually in the IL reports.
- Seek legislative approval to extend Medicaid eligibility for youth exiting care at age 18 or older up to age 21 to ensure ongoing health care and increased access to and utilization of health services. In the past few years, Wisconsin has been unable to achieve extended Medicaid benefits for youth aging out of care. Efforts to extend Medicaid eligibility will be ongoing.
- Increase youth participation in the ongoing evaluation and development of IL services. A Youth Advisory Council was created in 2004 and will continue. Other youth meetings and forums to encourage the sharing of information about their experiences in the child welfare system will be organized in various regions around the state. Information gained from these meetings and other communication with youth will be used for assessing existing services, informing policy development, and determining direction for future youth-directed activities.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- Determine if maintaining the current eligibility criteria for IL services is possible. Due to decreased federal funding, it may be necessary to revise the IL eligibility criteria for youth in Wisconsin. Currently, youth that have been in out-of-home care for at least six months after the age of 15 years are eligible for IL services and remain eligible up to 21 years of age. An ongoing analysis of funding, eligible youth, and affordable services will be conducted to determine if this criterion must be revised to effectively serve only those older youth with more intense needs and fewer natural supports.
- Implement federal IL reporting requirements when finalized. Incorporate independent living reporting into the eWiSACWIS system. Wisconsin has modified its existing IL reporting forms to include the proposed National Youth Transition Database (NYTD) Data Items (version dated December 2003). These forms will be disseminated to counties and tribes for annual reporting until the federal reporting requirements are finalized. At that time, the eWiSACWIS system will be modified to include the required IL data elements for annual reports.

B. Help youth receive education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment.

- Continue to assess all eligible youth for independent living skills functioning, including job search and maintenance, and develop an Independent Living Transition Plan based on the assessed levels of skill and youth input.
- Continue to provide all eligible youth with an array of services to support education and training for employment. Youth receiving IL services will receive training, experiential learning experiences, and support to identify, seek, obtain, and maintain employment. Youth assistance may include, but is not limited to, the following areas: procuring of necessary documents, completing applications, education planning, contacting colleges and employers, interview skills, job search, resume writing, social skills on the job, tolerance, conflict management and resolution, transportation, and gaining volunteer and other work-related experience.
- Continue referral and outreach services to link youth to other community agencies and resources for job seeking, training, and financial assistance. For youth to become and remain successfully employed, collaboration among IL coordinators, local job services programs, school counselors, teachers, and community resource agencies must occur. Youth will be assisted in identifying career choices and planning the steps necessary to achieve employment. IL coordinators will assist youth with these tasks and link them to the appropriate resource for continued education, job seeking, job training, transportation, etc.
- Annually compile and analyze data for IL employment-related services and outcomes.

C. Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and education institutions

- Develop an Independent Living Transition Plan for each eligible youth that identifies and addresses educational needs and goals for achieving post-secondary education and training. Efforts to assist youth with post-secondary education and training must start several years prior to high school completion. IL Coordinators, school counselors, friends, and family play an important part in motivating youth to pursue higher education or training, followed by helping them identify steps that need to be taken. Education plans containing individualized goals and objectives will be developed for each youth. IL Coordinators will continue to work with high school teachers and counselors to ensure that classes and credits are meeting necessary requirements. Where available, youth will also be connected to pre-college programs.
- Design, implement, and strengthen the statewide ETV Program to locally assist youth with post-secondary related needs and costs. In 2004, the ETV Program was implemented in Wisconsin. ETV Program funds were allocated to 71 counties, 2 tribes, and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. In 2005, the list of agencies receiving ETV Program funds was expanded to include the Lac Courte Oreilles tribe and the Division of Juvenile Corrections. ETV Program funds received by local agencies will be used to develop and maintain post-secondary related assistance for former foster youth. Agencies and youth will be encouraged to use the DCFS Scholarship Program for payment of tuition, fees, and books. All other costs and types of support will be provided via the local agency.
- Increase the amount of funding available for youth scholarships through the DCFS Scholarship Program. In 2004, the amount of funding for the DCFS Scholarship Program was increased from \$100,000 to \$125,000 annually. This amount will increase to \$157,740 in 2005. The DCFS Scholarship Program was created to provide grants for post-secondary related education and training for former foster youth. The awards follow the federal ETV Program guidelines, and scholarship awards combined with local ETV Program assistance is limited to \$5,000 per youth annually.
- Continue the efforts of the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth (HEOY) Advisory Group to help youth access and achieve higher education. The HEOY Advisory Group consists of members of the higher education community along with DCFS and private agency staff. The group will update and develop informational memos and resource materials for statewide dissemination to higher education staff, child welfare caseworkers, youth, foster parents, and other interested parties. Panel presentations to increase awareness about the challenges faced by youth and potential resources will be scheduled around the state. The panel will also help train IL Coordinators and others connected to youth to help them successfully access and maneuver within the higher education system. Efforts will also be ongoing to meet with higher education institutions to help them recognize and develop ways to reach out and help former foster youth access and achieve post-secondary education and training.
- Compile and analyze data regarding secondary and post-secondary services, support, and outcomes.

D. Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults.

- Continue efforts to connect youth to caring adults prior to and after leaving care. IL Coordinators will continue to help youth identify and develop positive relationships with caring adults in their communities. Natural connections with foster parents, social workers, teachers, and family members will continue to be encouraged and supported. Youth may also be connected to organizations in their communities where children are linked with mentors. With youth who are reluctant or unable to connect with others through these more typical means, connections with IL Coordinators and other child welfare caseworkers may become the primary contact for youth leaving care. These connections will be documented in each youth's ILTP.
- Continue to collect data regarding mentoring services and outcomes.

E. Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment and education and other appropriate support and services for former foster care youth ages 18-21 years.

- Provide youth with life history and critical documents prior to leaving out-of-home care placement. Efforts will continue to ensure that youth have copies of their birth certificates, social security cards, insurance cards, medical records, high school diploma or high school completion documents, written employment history, and other personal information about their lives and families.
- Every youth aging out of care will have an Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) that addresses the youth's transition from out-of-home care (OHC). Youth will participate directly in the development of their plan goals and activities and accept personal responsibility for gaining skills and independence. Each eligible youth in OHC placement must have an ILTP that is based on an IL skills assessment and incorporated into the permanency plan. As the youth approaches leaving care at 18 years or older, the ILTP will identify ongoing IL needs, goals, and outcomes, and describe how needs will be met and goals/outcomes achieved. The plans, services, and activities will address, but are not limited to, the following areas: high school completion, post-secondary education or training, career planning and employment, safe and stable housing, transportation, health and medical needs/services, community resources, support systems, finances, and youth self goals. The ILTP will also contain contact information for family, friends, and other caring adults identified by the youth to confirm support systems and simplify IL Coordinators' ability to locate and communicate with youth who have left care.
- Continue to make available an array of services and support for 18-21-year-olds. Youth no longer in care will be educated regarding community resources and, where appropriate, assisted to ensure knowledge of how to access resources. Youth will be informed regarding financial assistance, including CFCIP or ETV Program funds, which may be available at the local level. Youth will also be informed about ongoing classes or events where they are welcomed and encouraged to participate. They will leave care with contact information for

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

the IL Coordinator and any social workers or other significant people in child welfare system with whom the youth is familiar or may have developed positive relationships. If no such relationship exists, at a minimum, contact information for the IL Coordinator will still be provided in the event of future needs or crises.

- Provide room and board assistance for youth aging out of care that were in care on their 18th birthdays. Agencies may use up to 25% of their IL allocation for room and board payments for eligible youth.

Room and board definition: In accordance with the Chafee Act, only those youth in care on their 18th birthdays will be eligible for room and board assistance. Chafee funds may be used to provide financial assistance to eligible youth for the purpose of obtaining and establishing safe and stable housing. Room and board payments may be made to service providers, vendors, or youth to set up residence. Room and board may include security deposits, rent, furniture, utilities hook-up or payments, and other housing-related necessities. The county or tribe will assess individual youth's room and board needs and determine the level of room and board assistance that will be provided.

Emergency financial assistance for immediate shelter due to temporary, crisis situations will be available for all IL eligible youth and does not fall under the definition of room and board.

F. Make available vouchers for post-secondary education and training for youths who have aged out of care.

- Continue the development of Wisconsin's Education and Training Vouchers Program. Counties, tribes, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections will receive an annual allocation for the development and provision of local ETV Programs. Local agencies will ensure that IL eligible youth are informed about and have access to ETV Program assistance and funding. Each agency will have a policy and procedure for the administration of this program. ETV Program funds will be used only for post-secondary related activities and costs.
- Provide training and technical assistance to counties and tribes for the implementation and maintenance of the ETV Program. Regular technical assistance regarding ETV Program regulations, practices, policies, and procedures will be available for all counties and tribes. Meetings will be scheduled in all regions around the state to discuss program and practice issues and share information across agencies. A section for the ETV Program has been incorporated into the IL Basic Training curriculum and will be modified as needed for training sessions.
- Use ETV funding for scholarship awards for post-secondary tuition, fees, and books for eligible youth. The DCFS Scholarship Program increased the level of funding available for scholarships to \$287,865 in CY2006 and plans to allocate \$350,000 in CY2007. Award

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

payments will be made directly to the institution for the payment of tuition, fees, and books for each youth receiving a grant.

- Collect annual data and reports on the progress of local ETV Program efforts. Maintain data on the DCFS Scholarship Program funded with ETV Program funds.
2. *Describe how youth of various ages and at various stages of achieving independence are to be served.*

Independent living skills must be learned over the life span of the child, and foster parents are recognized as the primary trainers of IL skills for these youth. Helping youth gain skills necessary for self-sufficiency requires the involvement of foster parents, staff, classroom instructors, experiential training providers, life experiences, and ongoing support and safety nets.

Independent living (IL) services are required for all Wisconsin youth in out-of-home care placement for at least six months after the age of 15 years. While youth are in OHC, independent living services must be available and offered to all eligible youth. Services may include one-on-one training that occurs in natural environments, classroom training, and experiential learning. Trainers of IL skills may include foster parents, IL Coordinators, school staff, mentors, family members, and training programs offered through other community resources, agencies, or contracted services. Local agencies may design their IL programs and services to address the needs of youth based on number of eligible youth and geographic resources and barriers.

IL services are designed to target those areas designated in the Chafee Act and other individualized youth needs as assessed and addressed in the ILTP. Although the availability and provision of IL services are required, youth participation in those services is voluntary. Services may include, but are not limited to, the following areas: daily living skills, secondary and post-secondary education, obtaining drivers licenses, awareness and accessing of resources, budgeting and financial management, vocational and employment counseling, housing assistance, health education, prevention of risky behaviors, and accessing medical and mental health services.

All of the described services are available for youth aged 15-20 years meeting the IL eligibility criteria.

Barriers: There are no statutory barriers negatively impacting IL programs. However, there are other barriers that are being evaluated to determine if mitigation is possible. These include:

- The lack of continued Medicaid eligibility and other health insurance programs for youth aged 18 and older leaving OHC placement.
- The reluctance of some local agencies to allow youth to participate in driver education and obtain their drivers licenses prior to exiting OHC placement.
- The lack of transitional living program residences in many areas of the state for youth exiting OHC placement.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- A reduction in CFCIP and ETV Program funding to serve an increasing number of older youth in and exiting OHC.
- A lack of sufficient funding that would enable every child welfare agency in Wisconsin to have an assigned, full time Independent Living Coordinator.

3. *Discuss how the State involves the public and private sectors in helping adolescents in foster care achieve self-sufficiency.*

During this past year, the State coordinated and facilitated regular meetings with county, tribal, private, and other state agencies to collaborate, plan, and improve critical services for children and families. The PEP Implementation Team and PEP Out-of-Home Care Committee are used to seek input on independent living services in Wisconsin.

The DCFS also participates in meetings with the private and public sectors to focus on more specific issues pertaining to youth. The State IL Coordinator is a member of the Mental Health Transition Advisory Council that collaborates on mental health issues and services for youth transitioning to self-sufficiency. The coordinator also leads the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth Advisory Group to address the educational challenges and tackle post-secondary educational barriers faced by youth. Another collaborative group currently focusing on teen issues is the Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse, Committee on Children and Youth. Membership for all of these groups includes private and public sector professionals. Independent Living roundtables with county, tribal, and private agency service providers are also used to discuss and address current policy and practice issues for adolescent youth.

The State IL Coordinator also arranges meetings to address specific topics and areas of interest related to older youth issues. These meetings connect the statewide IL Coordinators with other community agencies to help each other learn, collaborate, and better serve older youth. Group participants may include the public and private sector staff in addition to youth, families, and foster parents.

4. *Describe in detail how public and private organizations were consulted and involved in the development of this part of the CFSP.*

As described previously, the State coordinated and facilitated regular meetings with county, tribal, private, and other state agencies and stakeholders to collaborate, plan, and improve critical services for children and families. The planning efforts continue to use the program framework laid out in the 2000 *Independent Living for Children in Out-of-Home Care* study

In addition, every county and tribal IL Coordinator, along with several private providers of IL services, were contacted directly to provide input for this five-year plan. All of their input is included throughout the various sections of the plan.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

A Youth Advisory Council was created and began meeting in 2004. This group of youth aged 15-21 years is sharing their experiences in the child welfare system to positively influence and inform state planning and policy.

5. Coordination with other Federal and State programs for youth and Indian tribes for Indian children.

The DCFS coordinates with other programs for youth to ensure mutual awareness of programs and collaboration on the ongoing development and improvement of services for youth. The DCFS has a contract with the Department of Corrections, Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) for IL eligible youth who are incarcerated. The DJC IL Coordinator participates in IL meetings to collaborate with child welfare agencies on services for former DJC youth. The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) launched a pilot project in Milwaukee County to provide support and services for youth to gain education, training, and employment. Prior to project implementation, meetings were held with DCFS and BMCW staff to coordinate the involvement of foster care youth into the project and ongoing case management for those youth. The DCFS participates in the Mental Health Transition Advisory Council led by the Division of Disability and Elder Services to better serve youth with disabilities and mental health needs.

The DCFS and the Dept. of Health and Family Services' Tribal Affairs Unit (TAU) work with each other and the tribes to ensure tribes are involved and participate in all IL activities. Three Wisconsin Indian tribes receive IL and ETV Program allocations to provide IL services to tribal youth. Tribal youth that are not members of these three tribes will receive IL services through the county agencies with which the tribe has agreements. Independent Living Work Plans are due to the State annually and must include assurances that all counties are collaborating with the tribes to identify and engage tribal youth in IL services and ensure appropriate and meaningful collaboration in the development of IL services for tribal youth. The plan must describe the steps taken to achieve effective IL services for tribal youth.

All tribes receive formal notification of IL program changes and issues via the state numbered and information memo system. In addition, IL Coordinators for the tribes receive all informal notices and surveys generated by the State IL Coordinator. These communications have proven to be an effective way to quickly obtain and share information about current IL practices and challenges, and obtain input on planning and activities.

In 2005, three tribes directly received Chafee funding for the provision of independent living services to tribal youth. Ho Chunk Nation, Lac du Flambeau, and Lac Courtes Oreilles receive IL allocations that are computed using a statewide allocation formula for the CFCIP. Tribes and counties receive funding based on the number of IL eligible youth and the number of IL eligible youth that received services in the previous calendar year. Tribes and counties submit this information annually to the DCFS.

Wisconsin tribal youth whose tribes are not receiving IL funding directly receive IL services through the county child welfare agency. The DCFS requires that counties and tribes collaborate on IL services for tribal youth. Counties submit an annual work plan that addresses their

collaboration and activities with the tribes. All county agencies serving tribal children report that they have regular, ongoing contact with the local tribe and services to tribal youth are reviewed and discussed.

Tribes are invited to participate in regional IL roundtables that are held throughout the state several times each year. These meetings are utilized to discuss any issues; i.e., services, policy, fiscal, etc. that IL coordinators are encountering in their programs. In 2005, Ho Chunk Nation hosted a workshop for IL Coordinators regarding mental health issues and effective IL services to youth.

In the mid 1990's a number of conversations were had between the State and all Wisconsin Tribes informing them of the availability of Independent Living funds and how it might be helpful for their youth. Over the years, different tribes applied for the grant. At this time the three tribes mentioned receive Independent Living and ETV funds. The other tribes have determined that the counties would provide IL services as outlined in their 161 agreements. Independent Living has, at times, been discussed at the ongoing Tribal meetings. Our plan to promote more Tribal involvement, is to have the State Independent Living Coordinator attend a meeting where the topic will be Independent Living funding and activities. This will coincide with discussions on re-evaluating tribal priorities.

6. Expansion of Medicaid eligibility to youth ages 18-20 years who have aged out of foster care.

DCFS has requested since 2001 to extend Medicaid eligibility for youth aging out of out-of-home care as allowed under the Chafee Act, but the requests have not been approved through the state budget process due to budget constraints. Extensive efforts have been made by the Department's Office of Strategic Finance (OSF), Division of Health Care Finance (DHCF), and the DCFS to analyze the programmatic and fiscal impact of extending Medicaid eligibility. It was learned that in Wisconsin:

- Children in out-of-home care are eligible for Medical Assistance (MA) up to age 18. Wisconsin also provides MA coverage to youths, including youths living with their parents, up to age 19 under Badger Care and Healthy Start. After reaching the age of 19 years, youth are no longer eligible for MA in Wisconsin, regardless of income, unless they are disabled, pregnant, or a caretaker of a minor relative.
- Approximately 300 teens age out of out-of-home care each year.
- Children and youth in out-of-home care have higher than average health care needs, particularly in the areas of mental health, chronic and recurrent diseases, and substance abuse. These needs, which continue and may intensify into adulthood, are unmet when the youth leave out-of-home care, turn 19, and lose MA. Youth who age out of the out-of-home care program do not have the financial, social, or family resources other youth might have to obtain medical treatment.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- The cost of expanding MA benefit will depend on how the proposal is phased in. An option is to phase in the expansion by age cohort. Specifically, in the first year, youth 19 or younger would be MA eligible. This would include all youth who already exited out-of-home but meet the eligibility criteria of having been in care on their 18th birthday. In the second year, youth 20 or younger would be eligible. Phasing in eligibility would reduce the additional state cost for the initial biennial budget period that the MA benefit is provided.
- Implementation of the extended MA eligibility would require one-time administrative costs to modify CARES and MMIS systems. Additional costs would be incurred for eWiSACWIS changes to capture health insurance data on these youth who are no longer in the child welfare system. Proposed federal reporting requirements for outcomes of youth leaving out-of-home care have included provisions that would require DCFS to track health insurance access for youth leaving out-of-home care.

Continuing Efforts to Expand Medicaid Benefits for Foster Care Youth: The Governor's KidsFirst plan includes a goal to extend Medicaid coverage as allowed under the Chafee Act. Wisconsin Governor Doyle will seek to provide young adults with continuing health coverage under Medicaid until they reach 21 years of age.

7. Determination of eligibility for benefits and services.

To comply with the Chafee Act and address critical needs of older youth in out-of-home care, Wisconsin developed liberal eligibility criteria for independent living services. Agencies were notified of the criteria in DCFS Memo Series 2001-06. All youth in out-of-home care for at least six months after the age of 15 achieve eligibility for IL services. This also includes adopted youth that were in out-of-home care for the same amount of time and period prior to adoption. Youth retain eligibility for all supports and services until their 21st birthdays. These same youth that are enrolled in post-secondary education or training institutions on their 21st birthdays may receive additional ETV Program support up to age 23.

Because Wisconsin is a county-administered service system, counties and tribes may design and operate their IL programs as needed for local youth. Program differences may occur due to varied levels of funding, availability of caseworkers to focus on older youths' needs and services, and community resources available in the community and nearby. All programs must adhere to the State definition of IL eligibility for youth. All programs must address the identified needs and service areas described in the Chafee Act, the 2000 *Independent Living for Youth in Out-of-Home Care* study, and State numbered and information memos regarding IL programs.

Youth participation in IL services is voluntary. Cases for youth that leave care prior to age 18 due to reunification may be closed for further IL services where the youth and family indicate there is no continued need for the service and/or they refuse to participate in the program.

All agencies must have IL services in place and be prepared to serve all youth up to 21 years who have achieved IL eligibility and up to 23 years for the ETV Program. Annual work plans indicate and verify that this is the case for all agencies contracting with the DCFS for IL services.

8. Fair and equitable treatment of benefit recipients.

Through implementation of Wisconsin's Program Enhancement Plan, the DCFS will organize review teams to monitor the performance of local agencies operating independent living programs. State-county contracts require those agencies to comply with all civil rights requirements applicable to federal funds. The DCFS collects information on independent living program activity and has regular meetings with local independent program coordinators to discuss program issues. The Department of Health and Family Services has regional offices that investigate complaints by clients regarding the services provided by local agencies.

The Wisconsin CFCIP has two major categories of benefits: the transitional housing room and board benefit and the scholarship program. Procedures are in place to ensure that program staff are aware of these benefits for youth and that all eligible youth are informed of these benefits and have an opportunity to request the assistance.

9. Public Comments

To develop the Chafee portion of the CFSP, the DCFS held public listening sessions and roundtable meetings with local agency staff to solicit comments on how CFCIP funds should be used. In addition, Independent Living Coordinators for counties, tribes, the Division of Juvenile Corrections, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and some private agencies were solicited directly for input into this plan. All of their comments were considered and included in its development.

10. Training Activities

All counties receive Independent Living (IL) training that meets the requirements of the Chafee Act through the DCFS program coordinator. Basic training is conducted for new local IL staff and coordinated topic specific training; (e.g., higher education, domestic violence, mental health transition, etc.) is provided as needed and requested by local programs.

11. Impact of Federal Funding Changes

State allocations for the Chafee IL and ETV programs are based on foster care caseload as reported for federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) purposes. In Wisconsin, the caseload has decreased from a high of 10,000 in CY 1999 to about 7,500 in CY 2005. As the caseload has decreased, the Chafee allocations to Wisconsin have gone down. The number of Chafee eligible youth has remained stable as most of the caseload reduction was among younger children.

The majority of Chafee funds are allocated to counties, tribes and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) for local services. Local agencies are given discretion by DCFS to set

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

local priorities for services. As Chafee funds decrease due to reductions in the federal grant award, DCFS allocations to local agencies are reduced and the local agencies make decisions on how to adjust service levels. Fewer youth may be served as a result of the reduced funding. The impact is primarily on the Chafee IL program as the ETV program was new in CY 2004.

CFSP for FFY 2007
Tribal Child Welfare Program

Coordination with Tribes

For the past several years, DCFS staff and the Department Tribal Affairs Unit have been meeting bimonthly with Directors of the Indian Child Welfare Departments of each of Wisconsin's eleven federally recognized tribes. The purposes of these meetings are for the Department to obtain input on policies, procedures, and child welfare practices from tribal child welfare professionals to provide information to Indian Child Welfare Departments on state laws, rules, standards, and policies, and to facilitate problem resolution between tribes and counties. In conjunction with the Child and Family Services Review and the subsequent Program Enhancement Plan (PEP), tribal representatives have been involved through the PEP Core Team and through these bimonthly meetings. In addition to those tribal issues included in the PEP, this group has developed seven tribal priorities, which were attached to the PEP. An updated version of the Tribal Child Welfare Priorities is attached to this plan.

DCFS intends to continue meeting bimonthly with Indian Child Welfare Directors to implement the seven priorities, including codification of the ICWA into state statutes, and to discuss and obtain input on other child welfare issues as they arise. For purposes of both the PEP and the CFSP, DCFS has established a PEP Implementation Team consisting of a wide variety of stakeholders within and outside of the child welfare system. Tribes are represented on the Implementation Team and the related PEP committees.

Assistance to Tribal Child Welfare Programs

As part of the DCFS staffing for the PEP, DCFS created an Indian Child Welfare Consultant position to work with tribal child welfare agencies and counties to ensure compliance with ICWA and improve child welfare services to Indian children and families. DCFS filled the Indian Child Welfare Consultant position in November of 2005. The position will focus on implementing the tribal child welfare priorities and working with tribal child welfare agencies and counties on the entire range of child welfare program issues.

In addition, DCFS staff will continue to work with DHFS Tribal Affairs Unit staff in establishing relationships with and providing technical assistance and consultation to tribal agencies to assure that tribal social services programs are seamlessly connected with their child welfare programs to better serve Indian families.

The Secretary of DHFS meets at least annually with tribal leaders and will continue to do so. DCFS participates in meetings with the Department Secretary, state managers, and state program staff to consult with tribal leaders and tribal program staff to determine how the state and tribes can best assist each other in assuring that the needs of Indian families are met in the context of culturally appropriate services.

Codification of ICWA in State Statute

The DCFS will seek to codify the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act into Chapters 48 (the Children's Code) and 938 (the Juvenile Justice Code) to facilitate an understanding of ICWA requirements on the parts of county and state caseworkers, supervisors, judges, District Attorneys and Corporation Counsel, and other professionals involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Over the Summer of 2006, two workgroups will be formed to assure that the draft language represents the intent of ICWA. The first workgroup will consist of state and tribal child welfare professionals and attorneys. The second workgroup will consist of state, county, and tribal child welfare professionals and attorneys. In the Fall of 2006, we will begin discussions with legislative leaders to develop a strategy for introduction of the proposal in the 2007-08 Legislature.

While awaiting this codification, DCFS will enhance our efforts to provide training on ICWA for all affected individuals. DCFS will also issue a numbered memo on related ICWA issues including notification requirements, placement preferences, and identification of children as Indian children. This will facilitate attempts to remedy problems identified by Indian child welfare staff in the processes related to the Child and Family Services Review, the Child and Family Services Plan, and the tribal priorities document

CFSP for FFY 2006

Title IV-E Foster Care Program

DCFS has identified several activities that will be accomplished over the next five years that are designed to enhance and improve permanency planning practice and outcomes for children.

A. Administrative rule

DCFS continues development of an administrative rule, which creates and codifies requirements related to reasonable efforts and permanency planning. The process for issuing this rule is expected to be completed in January 2008. The rule, which will be identified as Chapter HFS 44, Adm. Code, will:

- identify those tasks and activities related to the scheduling and notification of permanency plan reviews (6-month reviews) and permanency plan hearings (12-month reviews);
- describe the determinations that must be made at every review or hearing; and
- describe the content of permanency plans and permanency plan summary reports.

DCFS is also revising Ch. HFS 56, Adm. Code, "Foster Home Care for Children" and Ch. HFS 38 "Treatment Foster Care for Children," Adm. Code, and Ch. 54 "Child Placing Agencies," Adm. Code, as needed, to reflect changes to this rule as a part of the PEP. Modifications will include a requirement for local agency to provide all foster parents with foster parent handbooks, exceptions allowing more than 6 children in a foster home to keep siblings together, and any changes to foster parent training expectations. The rule revision process is also expected to be completed by January 2008.

Develop policies related to locating and involving relatives of children removed from their homes

Current Wisconsin statutes and regulations are inadequate and unclear regarding efforts that must be undertaken to determine paternity, seek acknowledgement of paternity, locate and involve relatives of both custodial and non-custodial parents, share information with potential relative caregivers, and enhance efforts to achieve permanence for children through the use of relative placements. DCFS expects that the policies and tools developed to increase the involvement of non-custodial parents and relatives will be issued by January 2007. Training on issues related to non-custodial parents will be provided throughout the spring 2007.

Revise foster parent training expectations

Based upon the work of the Foster Parent Training subcommittee of the Training Council, DCFS is working collaboratively with the Training Partnerships, local agencies, and the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center to revise training for foster parents. DCFS will revise the current numbered memo that originally established direct IV-E pass-through funding to reflect the recommendations of the subcommittee and issue the revised memo by January 2007.

The Training Partnerships have also committed to revising the current curriculum and to providing Training of Content in the summer 2007 with all changes expected to be implemented by the end of 2007.

D. Placement stability and re-entry

DCFS will continue to focus on issues contributing to placement stability and re-entry rates, though the scope of the problem is not currently known. Outside of recognizing that inconsistencies in documentation of shelter and detention placements within our data system have affected both of these results, DCFS must determine if there are any other core concerns (other than documentation) that are affecting these case practice outcomes.

In order to understand the underlying issues related to placement stability and re-entry rates, OPEP recently released an Operations Memo describing the proper way to document these placements in eWiSACWIS. Once agencies and staff begin to change how they document shelter and detention placements, DCFS will be able to better determine what other concerns may be related to placement stability and re-entry and how to successfully address those concerns.

CFSP for FFY 2007
Kinship Care Program

DCFS will continue to work towards providing increased support to kinship care providers. This includes working to improve the financial assistance and other support made available to relative caregivers.

The TANF Kinship Care payment for eligible children and relative caregivers remains at \$215 per child per month. This amount has not been changed since the Kinship Care program was created in 1997. During the 2005-2009 period, efforts will continue to assess this rate and determine if an increase in the payment is possible. Options that will be considered include a higher monthly payment for Long-Term Kinship Care (LTKC) cases where the child is permanently placed with the relative.

In addition, the following policy issue has been identified and targeted to improve Kinship Care services:

Ensuring that relatives requesting Kinship Care are entitled to receive an application form and are allowed to participate in eligibility processing for the program. Currently in areas where there are shortages of Kinship Care funding, waiting lists, higher numbers of voluntary cases, etc., agencies may limit or refuse applications to inquiring relatives. Consequently, children and relatives that may be eligible for Kinship Care payments are denied access to financial assistance and the potentially eligible Kinship Care population in each tribe or county is not identified and remains under-represented by the data. This directly impacts children, families and the local agencies' allocations for Kinship Care, which are estimated using the eligible population in each community.

CFSP for FFY 2007

Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare

The BMCW continues to place great emphasis on a family-centered approach to case planning and case management and has adopted the Coordinated Services Team model to support these goals and values. The *BMCW Standards of Practice* continue to be updated to support the consistency, quality, and timeliness of child protective services and out-of-home care. The *Standards* include assessment of and response to ensure child safety and the development and implementation of service plans to support family change. Contractor performance is monitored through comprehensive case and program reviews by the BMCW Program Evaluation Managers.

Workforce Development

The private partner CEO and BMCW Administrative leadership is committed to recruiting, retaining, and supporting a professional child welfare staff within all programs. The continuity of staff members working with families and children is important to consistent efforts to improve best practice and to ensuring the best outcomes for the families and children BMCW serves. Implementation has started and efforts continue towards finding ways to improve staff retention in all program areas.

Addressing Salary Structure

The Division of Children and Family Services has already implemented a compensation plan based on the research and recommendations from two studies conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Child Welfare League of America (available below). On July 22, 2005, Secretary Helene Nelson and the Governor announced that the Department of Health and Family Services identified one-time funds to support an increase in salaries for Ongoing Case Managers in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare following an unsuccessful attempt to secure funding for these efforts from the Legislature. Salary increases for Children's Family and Community Partnerships (CFCP) and LaCausa were implemented on 9/1/05. CFCP paychecks were distributed on 9/30/05 and the pay was retroactive to 9/1/05. LaCausa paychecks were distributed on 10/15/05 and the pay was retroactive to 9/1/05. The salary increase was a first step in bringing private agency Ongoing Case Managers into a comparable pay scale with BMCW state employed social workers. As the CWLA states, "when salary discrepancies become too large, compensation does become a critical, perhaps even overriding, issue" in recruitment and retention. As of April 2006, turnover has stabilized and there are fewer Case Managers leaving from our private partner agencies over the last six months since the salary increase.

Involving Staff in Retention Efforts

Working together with the UWM Helen Bader School of Social Work, the Division of Children and Family Services/BMCW is currently developing and incorporating additional strategies, based on the array of recommendations in the research reports, as well as extensive input from staff to better support and retain BMCW professionals in all program areas.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Independent research of the retention issues was contracted. Two studies surveyed staff about their work and what compels them to stay or to move to other career areas. The first report, *Review of Turnover in Milwaukee County Private Agency Child Welfare Ongoing Case Management Staff* by researchers Connie Flower, Jess McDonald, and Michael Sumski, was issued in January 2005. A second report by the Child Welfare League of America and the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee titled *Workforce Recruitment and Retention in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare* was released in October 2005. (Both reports are available on the BMCW web site <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/bmcw> under *New Initiatives*.)

As a follow up to the latest study, an all-staff meeting was held on December 20, 2005 at the Italian Community Center. The 14 recommendations of the report were introduced (Section 5, pgs. 134-149) by UW-Milwaukee faculty Steve McMurtry and Susan Rose. The approximate 200 staff members in attendance helped group the recommendations by common theme, after which those present were organized into workgroups to brainstorm implementation of the recommendations.

In early January 2006 the BMCW Director established a Workforce Recruitment and Retention Steering Committee to oversee the implementation of the recommendations. The Committee is co-chaired by two private agency representatives and a cross-section of staff from all levels of State and private agency membership from each program area and each region are currently working on the ideas gleaned from staff. These groups are:

- Group 1 – Mitigating compliance; standardizing practice
- Group 2 – Compensation
- Group 3 – Training and staff development
- Group 4 – Morale, staff recognitions, organizational culture, and climate
- Group 5 – Workload, documentation, efficiency

The work groups are working to further define each recommendation, determine which are practicable, and prioritize them in long- and short-term goals. A process for approving and implementing the final recommendations across agencies is being developed. The goal is to have a full implementation plan completed by July 2006.

BMCW established and implemented a part-time MSW program. BMCW is changing how training for new staff is delivered in conjunction with the Child Welfare Association.

XI. FISCAL INFORMATION FOR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN

This section of the plan includes information on state maintenance of effort as required under Title IV-B and proposed budgets for the FFY 2007 Title IV-B Subparts I and II, CAPTA, and Chafee CFCIP and ETV funds.

Maintenance of Effort for Children and Family Services Programs

Services to children and families are provided in Wisconsin primarily through county human or social service agencies. Counties typically have unified human service departments that are responsible for a broad range of state-mandated services. Tribes also operate human service programs and receive state funds for those services.

The primary method of funding children and family services is through the Community Aids program. Under Community Aids, an allocation that includes IV-B Subpart I funds, state tax dollars, and other funding sources goes to county and tribal human service agencies. IV-B Subpart II and Chafee funds are allocated to counties and tribes separately. In addition, counties and tribes provide funds from local sources to match the state allocation and provide additional services.

The Department's Human Services Reporting System (HSRS) provides information on counts of human service clients and counties submit expenditure reports – the "942" and "943" reports -- that allow expenditures to be matched with client counts. This information is used as the basis for Social Services Block Grant reporting and is also used for maintenance of effort reporting for Title IV-B. The following table summarizes the county expenditures for CY 2004.

For the Title IV-B Subpart I program, the 1979 level of federal spending for Wisconsin in the designated areas was \$1,240,275. Wisconsin currently does not spend more federal funds on the designated areas than was spent in 1979. At the time Title IV-B Part 1 funds were initially received, Wisconsin used the funds to increase funding to local agencies, initially through social service allocations than subsequently through the Community Aids program.

For the Title IV-B Subpart II program, Wisconsin meets the maintenance of effort requirement by spending in excess of the base amount from 1992 when Subpart II funds were first received. Compared with the following table for CY 2004, Wisconsin spent \$97.6 million on the Abused and Neglected Target Population and \$51.7 million on the Children and Family Target population in CY 1992. Current expenditures exceed those amounts. The \$51.7 million of 1992 expenditures for the Children and Family population reflects \$22.4 million of low income child care assistance. Most of those child care funds were transferred to the Department of Workforce Development in 1996.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

COUNTY SPENDING ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES (All Funds)—CY 2004

Funding Categories	Abused & Neglected Children	Children & Family Services
Child Day Care *	\$ 1,251,771	\$1,426,245
Supportive Home Care	0	660,235
Specialized Transportation	1,474,159	283,652
Comm. Prevention Access & Outreach	5,148,521	6,826,722
Community Living/Support Services	29,383,692	17,645,317
Investigations and Assessments	67,500,695	15,781,359
Work Related & Day Services	185,985	2,039,677
Community Residential Services	64,432,277	13,358,749
Community Treatment Services	18,397,109	9,379,550
Inpatient & Institutional Care	16,047,391	3,459,760
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$203,821,600	\$70,861,266

* Child care for work or training using TANF or Child Care Block Grant funds is not included. The childcare expenditures reflect primarily crisis/respite child care.

These services are available statewide through county social and human services agencies and are targeted to families who come to the attention of the agency through child abuse and neglect reports, referrals from other agencies, or self-referrals for assistance. These figures do not include services provided to children and families in other target groups, such as developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed.

Services are also provided through direct contracts between vendor agencies and the Department. Service categories, funding amounts, geographic distribution, and target groups are summarized in the following table.

Wisconsin has maintained or increased the state funding available to counties for child welfare and other family support services. In addition, the state has placed a maintenance-of-effort requirement on counties for programs for which the state provides funding that is enforced through contract requirements and program monitoring.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

The following are other programs that serve the target population for the Title IV-B program and contribute to the state maintenance of effort.

OTHER CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAMS

Program	Category of Service	Funding	Geographic Distribution	Target group
Brighter Futures (BFI)	BFI is a comprehensive prevention initiative to improve outcomes for youth	3.5 million	9 counties including Milwaukee, 1 tribe	High risk youth, including pregnant and parenting teens
Safe & Drug Free Schools	Evidence-based youth prevention services.	1.44 million	Statewide service	Youth & families
Community Services Block Grant	Multiple, geographically based low-income programs	7.5 million	69 counties statewide/11 Tribes	Low-income individuals and families
Adoption Information Center	Prevention/ Support Services	75,000	Statewide service	General public
Adoption Exchange	Prevention/ Support Services	166,000	Statewide service	Prospective adoptive families

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Wisconsin also funds family support services through programs administered by the Children's Trust Fund (Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board). Those programs are summarized below.

CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND PROGRAMS

Program	Category of Service	Funding	Geographic Distribution	Target group
Family Resource Programs	Prevention/ Support Services	1,040,000	13 programs in 12 counties (2 in Milwaukee)	Parents and their children birth to age 3
Access & Visitation	Support & Visitation Resources	148,000	8 Programs in 8 Counties	Children and non-custodial parents, primarily fathers
Right From the Start	Prevention/ Support Services	320,000	4 programs in 4 counties	Parents and their children birth to age 3
CAN Prevention Grants	Prevention/ Support Services	420,000	21 programs in all regions of the state	Varies with program

State Match Requirements


The Title IV-B program requires a 25% state match for Subpart I and II funds. The Chafee program requires a 20% match for CCFCIP and ETV funds. No match is required for CAPTA funds.

The state match for Title IV-B and Chafee is described in the following budget sheets.

CFS - 101 Forms

The CFS-101 Form, parts 1 and 2, are included with this plan.

**CFS-101, Part I: Annual Budget Request For Title IV-B, Subpart 1 & 2 Funds, CAPTA,
and Chafee Foster Care Independence Program**
Fiscal Year 2007, October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007 – Revised 9/08/06

1. State: WISCONSIN		2. EIN: 39-600-0469	
3. Address: Dept. of Health and Family Services P.O. Box 8916 Madison, WI 53708-8916		4. Submission: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Revision	
5. Estimated Title IV-B, Subpart 1 Funds (25% State match required).		\$5,108,635 (\$1,720,878 match)	
6. Total Estimated Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Funds. (This amount should equal the sum of lines a - f.) (25% State match required.)		\$5,509,898 (\$1,836,632 match)	
a) Total Family Preservation Services.		\$1,127,850	
b) Total Family Support Services.		\$1,127,850	
c) Total Time-Limited Family Reunification Services.		\$1,127,850	
d) Total Adoption Promotion and Support Services.		\$1,101,980	
e) Total for Other Service Related Activities (e.g. planning).		\$741,158	
f) Total Administration (not to exceed 10% of estimated allotment).		\$283,210	
7. Re-allotment of Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funds for States (25% State match required).			
a) Indicate the amount of the State's allotment that will not be required to carry out the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program. N/A - Wisconsin will use all Subpart 2 funds.			
b) If additional funds become available to States, specify the amount of additional funds the State is requesting. Wisconsin will accept additional Subpart 2 funds if funds are available.			
8. Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Basic State Grant Only (no State match required) Estimated CAPTA BSG Amount \$500,687 plus additional allocation, as available. Wisconsin will accept additional CAPTA funds if funds are available.			
9. Estimated Chafee Program Funds (20% State match required).			
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)		\$2,009,527 (\$502,382 match)	
Chafee Education and Training Vouchers.		\$676,087 (\$169,022 match)	
10. Re-allotment of CFCIP Funds (20% State match required).			
a) Indicate the amount of the State's allotment that will not be required to carry out CFCIP N/A - Wisconsin will use all CFCIP funds.			
b) If additional funds become available to States, specify the amount of additional funds the State is requesting. Wisconsin will accept additional CFCIP funds if funds are available.			
11. Certification by State Agency and/or Indian Tribal Organization.			
The State Agency submits the above estimates and request for funds under title IV-B, subpart 1 and/or 2, of the Social Security Act, CAPTA BSG and CFCIP, and agrees that expenditures will be made in accordance with the Child and Family Services Plan, which has been jointly developed with, and approved by, the ACF Regional Office, for the Fiscal Year ending September 30.			
Signature and Title of State Agency Official		Signature and Title of Regional Office Official	
Fred Ellen Bove Director, Office of Strategic Finance			
Date September 8, 2006		Date 9/8/06	

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

CFS-101, PART II: ANNUAL SUMMARY OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

OMB APPROVAL # 0980-0047

State WISCONSIN For FFY 2007, OCTOBER 1, 2006 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2007 Revised 9/08/06

											(k) NUMBER TO BE SERVED [X] Families []Individuals	(l) POP. TO BE SERVED	(m) GEOG. AREA TO BE SERVED
SERVICES/ACTIVITIES	TITLE IV-B		(c) CAPTA	(d) CFCIP & ETV	(e) TITLE IV-E	(f) TITLE XX (SSBG)	(g) TITLE IV-A TANF	(h) Title XIX (Medicaid)**	(i) Other Federal Programs	(j) State Local Donated Funds	100,000	Varies with Program	Statewide
	(a) I-CWS	(b) II-PSSF											
1) PREVENTION & SUPPORT SERVICES (FAMILY SUPPORT)	762	1128				1,770			4,160	23,000	40,000	Reports of abuse/neglect	Statewide/ Reservation
2) PROTECTIVE SERVICES	1230					560				21,200			
3) CRISIS INTERVENTION (FAMILY PRESERVATION)		1128				1,730			1,000	4,200			
(A) PRE-PLACEMENT PREVENTION	1969						7,197			24,100	10,000	All Children in foster care	Statewide/ Reservation
(B) REUNIFICATION SERVICES	948					590				8,000			
4. TIME-LIMITED FAMILY REUNIFICATION		1128								20,000			
5. ADOPTION PROMOTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES		1102								30,500		All eligible children	Statewide/ Reservation
6) FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE: (A) FAMILY FOSTER CARE					16,551						4,200		
(B) GROUP/INST CARE											300		Statewide/ Reservation
7) ADOPTION SUBSIDY PMTS.					37,927						3,400		
8) INDEPEND. LIVING SERVICES (A) CHAFEE FOSTER CARE IND.				1,796									
(B) CHAFEE ETV				662									
9) ADMIN & MGMT (A) PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	199	283	125	227	56,904								
(B) OTHER SERVICES *		741											
10) STAFF TRAINING			375		4,130								
11) FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING													
12) ADOPTIVE PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING													
13) CHILD CARE RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT TRAINING (Note: Crisis Respite Care)										5,000	5,000	Low Income Families	
14) TOTAL	5,108	5,509	500	2,685	115,512	4,650	7,197		5,160	136,000			

* The Other Services portion of IV-B Part II is shown under Other Services, Item 9-B

** Targeted Case Management revenues are not included.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Title IV-B, Subpart 1 - Child Welfare Program Services Proposed FFY 2007 Budget Revised 9/08/06

Administration	FED Funds
Program Staff	
Staff salaries (3.0 FTE)	\$ 139,800
Fringe (36%)	50,328
Supplies and Services	75
Indirect (6.13% of salary for 2.5 FTE) (4.9% of salary for 0.5 FTE)	8,528
Subtotal Administration	\$ 198,731
Program Services	
Community Aids Allocations	\$ 3,513,244
Allocated to counties and tribes	
Youth Aids	985,710
Allocated to counties	
Runaway Program	410,950
Allocated to local programs	
Subtotal Program Services	\$ 4,909,904
TOTAL	\$ 5,108,635

Note: The proposed FFY 2007 budget is based on the final FFY 2006 grant award.

Required State Match: 25% of total expenditures = **\$1,702,878**

Total Program Funding = **\$6,811,513**

Sources of Match:

- County child welfare agency expenditures of state funds provide through Community Aids and local tax levy funds for child protective services and in-home services to families.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Title IV-B, Subpart II - Family Preservation and Support Services Budget
Proposed Budget for FFY 2007
 Submitted 6/30/06

Administration		
Program Staff (2.0 FTE)		
Salary		\$ 115,000
Fringe (36%)		51,500
Supplies and Contracted Services		109,695
Indirect (6.13% of salary)		7,015
Subtotal Administration		\$ 283,210
Program Services		
Family Preservation (21.45%)		\$ 1,127,850
To local agency SSF programs		
Family Support (21.45%)		1,127,850
To local agency SSF programs		
Time-Limited Reunification (21.45%)		1,127,850
To local agency SSF programs		
Adoptions (20%)		1,101,890
To state adoption program services		
Other Services		741,158
County and Tribal PSSF (*)	290,000	
Coordinated Service Teams	100,000	
POCAN Technical Assistance	160,000	
Tribal Training Partnership	69,500	
PEP Implementation and program enhancements	121,658	
Subtotal Program Services		\$ 5,226,688
TOTAL		\$ 5,509,898

The proposed FFY 2007 budget is based on the final FFY 2006 award, including the mandatory and discretionary portions of the IV-B Subpart II award.

IV-B Subpart II - Promoting Safe and Stable Families

State Match Calculation

FFY 2007 Plan – Submitted 6/30/06

	IV-B Funds	State Match	Total Program
Family Preservation	\$ 1,127,850	\$ 367,327	\$ 1,504,177
Family Support	1,127,850	367,327	1,504,177
Reunification	1,127,850	367,326	1,504,176
Adoption	1,101,980	367,326	1,469,306
Other Services	741,158	367,326	1,108,484
Subtotal, Program Services	5,226,688	1,836,632	7,063,320
State Administration	283,210	N/A	283,210
TOTAL	\$ 5,509,898	\$1,836,632	\$ 7,346,530

Notes on State Match:

6. The majority of IV-B funds are allocated to counties and tribes to operate the family support, preservation and reunification portions of the program. Counties and tribes are also allocated funds for other activities with the requirement that these funds be used for the family support, preservation and reunification activities. Local program administration is limited to 10% of the local allocation and included in the Other Services category. Match funds are provided by counties agencies using state funds provided through the Community Aids of Children and Families Incentive programs along with local tax levy funds. The estimated match amounts are based on local agency expenditures as reported to DCFS. The actual amount of local agency expenditures exceeds the minimum match required for the Subpart II program.
7. The IV-B funds for adoption program services are used in conjunction with state funds and adoption incentive funds. The estimated match for the adoption services portion of the Subpart II program is based on local agency expenditures for post-adoption services provided to families adopting special needs children.
8. The other services category includes funds allocated by DCFS for programs such as the Tribal Training Partnership, Coordinated Service Team development, POCAN training and technical assistance, and PEP implementation activities. The estimated match for other services consists of local agency expenditures for family support, preservation and reunification services or local agency expenditures for the specific projects such as Coordinated Service Teams or POCAN.
9. No state match is provided for state administration. The match amounts for other Subpart II program components are calculated based on the total state match needed for the program.

Amount of Federal funds expended in each of the four categories of services in FY 2004 for Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) programs:

Adoption	\$ 991,182.00	20.00%
Support	1,349,504.50	27.23%
Preservation	1,230,418.30	24.83%
Reunification	1,137,007.20	22.94%
<u>Admin</u>	<u>247,795.00</u>	<u>5.00%</u>
Total:	4,955,907.00	100.00%

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act FFY 2007 Budget Submitted 6/30/06

Administration	FED Funds
Program Staff (1 FTE)	
Salary	\$ 51,250
Fringe (36%)	20,400
Supplies and Services	50,660
Indirect (6.1% of salary)	3,130
Subtotal Administration	\$ 125,440
Program Services	
Training and technical assistance	\$ 375,247
Subtotal Program Services	\$ 375,247
TOTAL	\$ 500,687

Note: The proposed FFY 2007 budget is based on the final FFY 2006 grant award.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

**Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program
FFY 2007 Budget
Revised 9/08/06**

Administration	ETV Funds (FED)
Supplies and Services	\$ 14,002
Subtotal Administration	14,002
Program Services	
Independent Living Program Allocations	
Counties and BMCW	295,718
Tribes	4,534
Juvenile Aftercare Program	11,843
DCFS Scholarship Program	350,000
Subtotal Program Services	662,085
TOTAL	\$ 676,087

Note: The proposed FFY 2007 budget is based on the FFY 2007 allocation amount

Required State Match: 20% of total expenditures = **\$169,022**

Total Program Funding = **\$845,109**

Sources of Match:

- County child welfare agency expenditures of state funds provide through Community Aids and local tax levy funds for child protective services and in-home services to families.

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)
FFY 2007 Budget
Revised 9/08/06

Administration	CFCIP Funds (FED)
Program Staff	
Staff salaries (2.0 FTE)	95,525
Fringe (44.22%)	42,241
Supplies and Services	69,959
Indirect (6.1% of salary)	5,827
Subtotal Administration	213,552
Program Services	
Independent Living Program Allocations	
Counties and BMCW	1,702,090
Tribes	48,705
Juvenile Aftercare Program	45,180
Subtotal Program Services	1,795,975
TOTAL	2,009,527

Note: The proposed FFY 2007 budget is based on the final FFY 2006 grant award.

Required State Match: 20% of total expenditures = **\$502,382**

Total Program Funding = **\$2,511,909**

Sources of Match:

- County child welfare agency expenditures of state funds provide through Community Aids and local tax levy funds for child protective services and in-home services to families.

XII. ASSURANCES

The Department, on behalf of the Governor, must provide assurances that Wisconsin is in compliance with federal requires for Title IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee. The assurances are included in this section of the plan.

The following assurances are included:

- Title IV-B
- CAPTA
- Chafee CFCIP
- Chafee ETV

TITLE IV-B CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The assurances listed below are in 45 CFR 1357.15(c) and title IV-B sections 422(b)(10), 422(b)(12), section 422 (b) (14), section 432(a)(4), 432 (a)(7) and 432(a)(9). These assurances will remain in effect during the period of the current five-year CFSP.

1. The State assures that it will participate in any evaluations the Secretary of HHS may require.
2. The State assures that it will administer the CFSP in accordance with methods determined by the Secretary to be proper and efficient.
3. The State assures that it has a plan for the training and use of paid paraprofessional staff, with particular emphasis on the full-time or part-time employment of low-income persons, as community service aides; and a plan for the use of non-paid or partially paid volunteers in providing services and in assisting any advisory committees established by the State.
4. The State assures that standards and requirements imposed with respect to child care under title XX shall apply with respect to day care services, if provided under the CFSP, except insofar as eligibility for such services is involved.
5. the State assures that it is operating, to the satisfaction of the Secretary:
 - a statewide information system from which can be readily determined the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care;
 - a case review system (as defined in section 475(5) for each child receiving foster care under the supervision of the State;
 - a service program designed to help children—where safe and appropriate, return to families from which they have been removed; or be placed for adoption, with a legal guardian, or, if adoption or legal guardianship is determined not to be appropriate for a child, in some other planned, permanent living arrangement; and
 - a pre-placement preventive services program designed to help children at risk of foster care placement remain safely with their families; and
 - The State assures that it has implemented policies and administrative and judicial procedures for children abandoned at or shortly after birth that are necessary to enable permanent decisions to be made expeditiously with respect to the placement of such children.
6. The State assures that plans will be developed for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

7. The State assures that it will collect and report information on children who are adopted from other countries and who enter State custody as a result of the disruption of an adoptive placement, or the dissolution of an adoption. Such information will include the reasons for disruption or dissolution, the agencies who handled the placement or adoption, the plans for the child, and the number of children to whom this pertains.
8. The State assures that no more than 10 percent of expenditures under the plan for any fiscal year with respect to which the State is eligible for payment under section 434 of the Act for the fiscal year shall be for administrative costs and that the remaining expenditures shall be for programs of family preservation services, community-based family support services, time-limited reunification services and adoption promotion and support services, with significant portions of such expenditures for each such program.
9. The State assures that Federal funds provided to the State for title IV-B, Subpart 2 programs will not be used to supplant Federal or non-Federal funds for existing services and activities.
10. The State assures that, in administering and conducting service programs under this plan, the safety of the children to be served shall be of paramount concern.

I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Certified by Fredi- Ellen Bove Date: 6/28/06
Fredie-Ellen Bove

Title: Director, Office of Strategic Finance
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Reviewed by _____ Date: _____

(ACF Regional Representative)

CAPTA ASSURANCES FOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROGRAM

On behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, I certify that the State has in effect and is enforcing a State law, or has in effect and is operating a Statewide program, relating to child abuse and neglect which includes:

- 1) provisions or procedures for reporting known or suspected instances of child abuse and neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(i));
- 2) policies and procedures (including appropriate referrals to child protection service systems and for other appropriate services) to address the needs of infants born and identified as affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, including a requirement that health care providers involved in the delivery or care of such infants notify the child protective services system of the occurrence of such condition in such infants (section 106(b)(2)(A)(ii));
- 3) the development of a plan of safe care for the infant born and identified as being affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms (section 106(b)(2)(A)(iii));
- 4) procedures for the immediate screening, risk and safety assessment, and prompt investigation of such reports (section 106(b)(2)(A)(iv));
- 5) triage procedures for the appropriate referral of a child not at risk of imminent harm to a community organization or voluntary preventive service (section 106(b)(2)(A)(v));
- 6) procedures for immediate steps to be taken to ensure and protect the safety of the abused or neglected child, and of any other child under the same care who may also be in danger of abuse or neglect; and ensuring their placement in a safe environment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(vi));
- 7) provisions for immunity from prosecution under State and local laws and regulations for individuals making good faith reports of suspected or known instances of child abuse or neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(vii));
- 8) methods to preserve the confidentiality of all records in order to protect the rights of the child and of the child's parents or guardians, including requirements ensuring that reports and records made and maintained pursuant to the purposes of CAPTA shall only be made available to--
 - a) individuals who are the subject of the report;
 - b) Federal, State, or local government entities, or any agent of such entities, as described in number 9 below;
 - c) child abuse citizen review panels;
 - d) child fatality review panels;

Wisconsin Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services and Progress Report

- e) a grand jury or court, upon a finding that information in the record is necessary for the determination of an issue before the court or grand jury; and
 - f) other entities or classes of individuals statutorily authorized by the State to receive such information pursuant to a legitimate State purpose (section 106(b)(2)(A)(viii);
- 9) provisions to require a State to disclose confidential information to any Federal, State, or local government entity, or any agent of such entity, that has a need for such information in order to carry out its responsibility under law to protect children from abuse and neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(ix));
- 10) provisions which allow for public disclosure of the findings or information about the case of child abuse or neglect which has resulted in a child fatality or near fatality (section 106(b)(2)(A)(x));
- 11) the cooperation of State law enforcement officials, court of competent jurisdiction, and appropriate State agencies providing human services in the investigation, assessment, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse or neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xi));
- 12) provisions requiring, and procedures in place that facilitate the prompt expungement of any records that are accessible to the general public or are used for purposes of employment or other background checks in cases determined to be unsubstantiated or false, except that nothing in this section shall prevent State child protective services agencies from keeping information on unsubstantiated reports in their casework files to assist in future risk and safety assessment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xii));
- 13) provisions and procedures requiring that in every case involving an abused or neglected child which results in a judicial proceeding, a guardian ad litem, who has received training appropriate to the role, and who may be an attorney or a court appointed special advocate who has received training appropriate to that role (or both), shall be appointed to represent the child in such proceedings—
- (a) to obtain firsthand, a clear understanding of the situation and needs of the child; and
 - (b) to make recommendations to the court concerning the best interests of the child (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xiii));
- 14) the establishment of citizen review panels in accordance with subsection 106(c) (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xiv));
- 15) provisions, procedures, and mechanisms –
- (a) for the expedited termination of parental rights in the case of any infant determined to be abandoned under State law; and
 - (b) by which individuals who disagree with an official finding of abuse or neglect can appeal such finding (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xv));

- 16) provisions, procedures, and mechanisms that assure that the State does not require reunification of a surviving child with a parent who has been found by a court of competent jurisdiction--
 - a) to have committed a murder (which would have been an offense under section 1111(a) of title 18, United States Code, if the offense had occurred in the special maritime or territorial jurisdiction of the United States) of another child or such parent;
 - b) to have committed voluntary manslaughter (which would have been an offense under section 1112(a) of title 18, United States Code, if the offense had occurred in the special maritime or territorial jurisdiction of the United States) of another child or such parent;
 - c) to have aided or abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit such murder or voluntary manslaughter; or
 - d) to have committed a felony assault that results in the serious bodily injury to the surviving child or another child of such parent (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xvi));
- 17) provisions that assure that, upon the implementation by the State of the provisions, procedures, and mechanisms under number 16 above, conviction of any one of the felonies listed in number 16 above constitute grounds under State law for the termination of parental rights of the convicted parent as to the surviving children (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xvii));
- 18) provisions and procedures to require that a representative of the child protective services agency shall, at the initial time of contact with the individual subject to a child abuse and neglect investigation, advise the individual of the complaints or allegations made against the individual, in a manner that is consistent with laws protecting the rights of the reporter (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xviii));
- 19) provisions addressing the training of representatives of the child protective services system regarding the legal duties of the representatives, which may consist of various methods of informing such representatives of such duties, in order to protect the legal rights and safety of children and families from the initial time of contact during investigation through treatment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xix));
- 20) provisions and procedures for improving the training, retention and supervision of caseworkers (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xx));
- 21) provisions and procedures for referral of a child under the age of 3 who is involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect to early intervention services funded under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxi));
- 22) not later than June 25, 2005 (2 years after the enactment of Public Law 108-36), provisions and procedures for requiring criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relatives residing in the household (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxii));

23) procedures for responding to the reporting of medical neglect (including instances of withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions), procedures or programs, or both (within the State child protective services system), to provide for--

- a) coordination and consultation with individuals designated by and within appropriate health care facilities;
- b) prompt notification by individuals designated by and within appropriate health-care facilities of cases of suspected medical neglect (including instances of withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions); and
- c) authority, under State law, for the State child protective services system to pursue any legal remedies, including the authority to initiate legal proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction, as may be necessary to prevent the withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions (section 106(b)(2)(B)); and

24) authority under State law to permit the child protective services system of the State to pursue any legal remedies, including the authority to initiate legal proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction, to provide medical care or treatment for a child when such care or treatment is necessary to prevent or remedy serious harm to the child, or to prevent the withholding of medically indicated treatments from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions (section 113).

I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Certified by Fredi- Ellen Bove Date: 6/28/06
Fredie- Ellen Bove

Title: Director, Office of Strategic Finance
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Reviewed by _____ Date: _____

(ACF Regional Representative)

CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM ASSURANCES

On behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, I certify that the State has in effect and is operating a Statewide program relating to Foster Care Independent Living and that the following provisions to effectively implement the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program are in place:

1. The State will provide assistance and services to youth who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and have not attained 21 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(A)];
2. Not more than 30 percent of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment for a fiscal year will be expended for room and board for youth who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and have not attained 21 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(B)];
3. None of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment will be expended for room or board for any child who has not attained 18 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(C)];
4. The State will use training funds provided under the program of Federal payments for foster care and adoption assistance to provide training to help foster parents, adoptive parents, workers in group homes, and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living, and will, to the extent possible, coordinate such training with the independent living program conducted for adolescents [Section 477(b)(3)(D)];
5. The State will adequately prepare prospective foster parents with the appropriate knowledge and skills to provide for the needs of the child before a child, under the supervision of the State, is placed with prospective foster parents and that such preparation will be continued, as necessary, after the placement of the child. [Section 471(a), as amended];
6. The State has consulted widely with public and private organizations in developing the plan and has given all interested members of the public at least 30 days to submit comments on the plan [Section 477(b)(3)(E)];
7. The State will make every effort to coordinate the State programs receiving funds provided from an allotment made to the State under subsection (c) with other Federal and State programs for youth (especially transitional living youth projects funded under part B of title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974); abstinence education programs, local housing programs, programs for disabled youth (especially sheltered workshops), and school-to-work programs offered by high schools or local workforce agencies [Section 477(b)(3)(F)];

8. Each Indian tribe in the State has been consulted about the programs to be carried out under the plan; there have been efforts to coordinate the programs with such tribes; and benefits and services under the programs will be made available to Indian youth in the State on the same basis as to other youth in the State [Section 477(b)(3)(G)];
9. Adolescents participating in the program under this section will participate directly in designing their own program activities that prepare them for independent living and the adolescents will be required to accept personal responsibility for living up to their part of the program [Section 477(b)(3)(H)]; and
10. The State has established and will enforce standards and procedures to prevent fraud and abuse in the programs carried out under the plan [Section 477(b)(3)(I)].

I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Certified by Fredi-Ellen Bove Date: 6/28/06
Fredie-Allen Bove

Title: Director, Office of Strategic Finance
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Reviewed by _____ Date: _____

(ACF Regional Representative)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER PROGRAM ASSURANCES
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

On behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, I certify that the State has in effect and is operating a Statewide program relating to Foster Care Independent Living and that the following provisions will be implemented as of September 30, 2003:

1. The State will comply with the conditions specified in subsection 477(i).
2. The State has described methods it will use to:
 - ensure that the total amount of educational assistance to a youth under this and any other Federal assistance program does not exceed the total cost of attendance; and
 - avoid duplication of benefits under this and any other Federal assistance program, as defined in section 477(3)(b)(J).

I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Certified by Fredi- Ellen Bove Date: 6/28/06
Fredie- Ellen Bove

Title: Director, Office of Strategic Finance
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Reviewed by _____ Date: _____

(ACF Regional Representative)

PLAN ATTACHMENTS

Attached Documents

The following documents referenced in the narrative of the plan are attached.

1. DHFS Organizational Chart
2. DCFS Organizational Chart
3. Adoption Program Report for CY 2005
4. BMCW Corrective Action Plan
 - 4.A Children's Family and Community Partnerships
 - 4.B La Causa
 - 4.C First Choice for Children
 - 4.D Intake and Initial Assessment
5. Citizen Review Panel Annual Reports
 - 5.A Marathon County
 - 5.B LaCrosse County
 - 5.C Outagamie County
6. Tribal Child Welfare Issues (updated 4/06)
7. DHFS Tribal Consultation Policy (3/05)

Web Site References

The plan references web sites for other information. These web sites include:

The Wisconsin PEP can be found at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/cfsr/PEP.htm>.

The Kids First agenda can be found at <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/docs/kidsfirst.pdf>.

Statutory language for CAPTA can be found at <http://folio.legis.state.wi.us/quickfind.html>

Note: To use the Folio on-line statutes select Chapter 48 Children's Code and enter in the appropriate statute number.